THE QUESTION

What does it mean that elders are caretakers, not owners, of the church (1 Peter 5:2–3)?

Asked by a THF member on July 31, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 10 numbered quotations · the 33 early Christian passages and 202 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/what-does-it-mean-that-elders-are-caretakers-not-owners-of-the-church

The short answer *From the text: says what the passages say*

A caretaker looks after something that belongs to someone else and must answer to the owner. Early Christian writers saw the church as Christ's flock, which He sought by His blood. Bishops and elders feed, guard and heal it, keep its money apart from their own, and will give God an account for every soul.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith’s library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith’s library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 6

The flock belongs to Christ, not the shepherds

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian says that though there are many shepherds, there is only one flock, and it is made of the sheep Christ sought by His own blood. Tertullian makes the wider point that people belong to their Creator. So a leader tends what is God's; he does not own it.

1 “For although we are many shepherds, we feed one flock, and we ought to gather and cherish all the sheep whom Christ sought by His blood and passion.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 13, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

2 “Since man belongs to no one but the Creator, He possessed the one who belonged to Him.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *Against Marcion* 32 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 11, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 6

Feeding and healing the sheep is the job

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian asks what greater duty overseers have than to nourish and keep the sheep with careful concern. Ignatius tells the presbyters to feed the flock among them, the same words Peter uses. The caretaker's work is to feed, not to rule for his own gain.

3 “What greater or more fitting duty do overseers have than to care, with careful concern and healing medicine, for the nourishing and keeping of the sheep?”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 13, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

4 “You presbyters, "feed the flock which is among you," until God reveals who is to lead you.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Ignatius of Antioch,** *Epistles of Ignatius* (c. 98–117 AD) **Source 5, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 6

The owner will ask for His flock back

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian repeats God's warning against careless shepherds: the Lord will require His flock at their hands. The Apostolic Constitutions say the bishop is entrusted with the Lord's people and must give an account for their souls. A caretaker answers to the one who owns the flock.

5 “Therefore the Lord says, "Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to stop feeding the flock; neither shall they feed them anymore. For I will deliver them from their mouth, and I will feed them with judgment."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 13, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

6 “Let the presbyters and deacons do nothing without the bishop's consent, for he is the one entrusted with the Lord's people and will be required to give an account for their souls.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 21, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 6

Church money is the Lord's, not the bishop's

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The Apostolic Constitutions apply the same idea to church funds. The bishop manages them as before God, but may not take any for himself or hand them to his relatives. His own property and the Lord's property must be kept clearly separate.

7 “Let the bishop take care of the church's revenues and manage them as in the presence of God. But it is not lawful for him to take any part of them for himself, or to give the things of God to his own relatives.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 23, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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8 “Let the bishop's own property, if he has any, and the property that belongs to the Lord, be clearly kept separate.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 21, page 7 Read it in the library ›

POINT 5 OF 6

Care like a parent, correct without harshness

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The same writing tells the bishop to love the people as his children and cherish them. He must correct and rebuke, but never strike or ruin anyone. The goal is that they turn back and live better. This matches Peter's call to lead without domineering.

9 “In the same way, let the bishop love the laity as his children, caring for them and cherishing them with loving diligence: like eggs, so that young may hatch; or like young birds, taking them in his arms so that they may be raised into birds.”

later in the same passage

“He must reprove, but not strike; bring them low so that they may be ashamed, but not ruin them; warn them so that they may be converted; and rebuke them so that they may be reformed and live better lives.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 15, page 6 Read it in the library ›

POINT 6 OF 6

A true caretaker puts the flock's peace first

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Clement of Rome asks the noble and loving to say they will step aside if they have caused division. What matters is that the flock of Christ lives in peace, not that anyone keeps his place. That is how someone acts who knows the flock is not his.

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10 "If because of me there has been sedition, disagreement, and division, I will leave, I will go wherever you want, and I will do whatever the majority commands; only let the flock of Christ live in peace with the presbyters appointed over it."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians*
THF's updated English

Source 31, page 7 **Read it in the library ›**

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not give detailed rules for how a church today should hold buildings or property.
- They speak mainly of bishops and presbyters, not of every kind of church worker.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 33 early Christian passages and 202 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–33, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 34–150, in Bible order), then 85 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain). “… [continues online]” marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *33 passages from 13 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 15 (1885 English; on point 4) “appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, 1 Timothy 3:4 and truthful and proven… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 2–3*

2 *Shepherd* (1885 English; on point 3) also, standing joyful before your Father, may give an account of you all to your Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Shepherd* (1885 English) “will tell, therefore, those who preside over the Church, to direct their ways in righteousness, that they may receive in full the promises with great glory… [continues online] **read ›**

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Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 4–5*

4 *Epistle to the Trallians* (1885 English) “they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God… [continues online] **read ›**

5 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 2** “presbyters, “feed the flock which is among you,” till God shall show who is to hold the rule over you… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · sources 6–7*

6 *Diatessaron* 26 (1885 English; on point 3) “said to him, Take 41 [Arabic, p. 103] your writing, and sit down, and write eighty cors… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Diatessaron* 54 (on point 2) more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, my Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs for me." John 21:16 He said… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 8–9*

8 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) “Such presbyters does the Church nourish, of whom also the prophet says: “I will give thy rulers in peace, and thy bishops in righteousness.” Of whom also did the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English; on point 1) “heed, therefore, both to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has placed you as bishops, to rule the Church of the Lord, which He has… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 10–11*

10 *De Fuga in Persecutione* 13 (1885 English) “the apostles, with so much foresight, make the office of overseer of this type, that the occupants might be able to enjoy their rule free from anxiety, under color of… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Marcion* 32 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** “then, man is the property of none other than the Creator, He possessed Him who owned him… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 12–14*

12 *Epistles* (on point 3) First of all, he cannot be made ready for martyrdom if he is not armed for the struggle by the Church. And his spirit is lacking if the Eucharist he… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *Epistles* **Quotes 1, 3, 5, pages 2, 3** “greater or more fitting duty do overseers have than to care, with careful concern and healing medicine, for the nourishing and keeping of the sheep? For the Lord speaks and… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 1) “how can he be esteemed a pastor, who — while the true shepherd remains and presides over the Church of God by successive ordination — succeeding to no one, and beginning from… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 15–24*

15 *Apostolic Constitutions* **Quote 9, page 4** “them sound to the Church. Feed the flock, not with insolence and contempt, as lording it over them, Ezekiel 34:4 but as a gentle shepherd, gathering the lambs into… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 3) And when the offender begs to be received again with tears, receive him, and let the whole Church pray for him. Then, when you have admitted him by the laying… [continues online] **read ›**

17 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 2) When you gather an assembly of the Church, since you are like the captain of a great ship, arrange the meetings with all possible skill. Instruct the deacons, like sailors, … [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) are enemies of the Church, and they lay snares for it. They corrupt the flock and defile the heritage of Christ. They only pretend to wisdom, and they are the… [continues online] **read ›**

19 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 4) does eat, but does not eat it all up, so you who labor on the threshing floor, that is, in the Church of God, should eat from the Church. This… [continues online] **read ›**

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20 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 3) of whom God speaks in Jeremiah: "Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have polluted my heritage," Jeremiah 12:10. And in another place: "My anger is growing hot against… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quotes 6, 8, pages 3, 4** "the proper goods of the bishop, if he has any, and those belonging to the Lord, be openly distinguished, that he may have power when he dies to leave his… [continues online] **read ›**

22 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) run together to the Church of the Lord, which He has purchased with the blood of Christ, the beloved, the first-born of every creature… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 3** "Let the bishop have the care of ecclesiastical revenues, and administer them as in the presence of God… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 4) "all first-fruits be brought to the bishop, and to the presbyters, and to the deacons, for their maintenance… [continues online] **read ›**

Archelaus, *c. 270–300 AD · source 25*

25 *Disputation with Manes* 1 is, the foundation of the Church, and has put us in trust of the… [continues online] **read ›**

Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · source 26*

26 *Oration on the Psalms* 1 (1885 English; on point 1) "just as hunters take by a sheep the wolves that devour sheep, even so the Chief Shepherd, 1 Peter 5:4 offering Himself as man to the spiritual wolves and… [continues online] **read ›**

Peter of Alexandria, *c. 300–311 AD · source 27*

27 *Canonical Epistle* (1885 English; on point 3) "pastor, who ought to lay down his life for the sheep, when he has deserted the flock that was committed unto him, and repudiated its care and administration, and as… [continues online] **read ›**

John Chrysostom, *c. 386–407 AD · sources 28–30*

28 *Homilies on Acts* (on point 2) "which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Homilies on Ephesians* 11 (1885 English; on point 5) "have not lordship over your faith 2 Corinthians 1:24, beloved, nor command we these things as your lords and masters… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Homilies on First Thessalonians* (on point 2) "guard the King's court. Therefore, feed them… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *sources 31–33*

31 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** "let the flock of Christ live on terms of peace with the presbyters set over it." He that acts thus shall procure to himself great glory in the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (1885 English) us reverence the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was given for us; let us esteem those who have the rule over us… [continues online] **read ›**

33 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* Our apostles also knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be conflict regarding the office of the episcopate. For this reason, considering that they had obtained perfect foreknowledge… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *117 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

34 **Genesis 14:21** Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the men, and take the horses for yourself." **read ›**

35 **Exodus 18:21** And you yourself select able men from all the people, God-fearing, righteous men who hate arrogance, and set them over the people as captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, and captains of tens. **read ›**

36 **Exodus 21:34** the owner of the pit shall pay for the loss; he shall give money to their owner, and the dead animal shall be his. **read ›**

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37 **Exodus 21:36** But if the bull is known to have been in the habit of attacking with its horns in the past, and its owner has been warned, and he has not done away with it, he shall repay bull for bull, and the dead one shall be his. **read ›**

38 **Exodus 22:11** an oath of God shall be between them both, that he has truly done no wrong at all with his neighbor's deposit; and so its owner shall accept it, and he shall not pay for the loss. (Septuagint Exodus 22:10 (Exodus 22:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

39 **Exodus 22:12** But if it is stolen from him, he shall pay the owner for the loss. (Septuagint Exodus 22:11 (Exodus 22:12 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

40 **Exodus 22:13** And if it is torn by wild beasts, he shall bring him to the prey, and he shall not pay for the loss. (Septuagint Exodus 22:12 (Exodus 22:13 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

41 **Exodus 22:14** And if anyone borrows anything from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies or is carried off, and its owner is not with it, he shall pay for the loss. (Septuagint Exodus 22:13 (Exodus 22:14 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

42 **Exodus 22:15** But if its owner is with it, he shall not pay for the loss; and if it was hired, it shall be his in place of his hire. (Septuagint Exodus 22:14 (Exodus 22:15 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

43 **Leviticus 25:14** If you sell property to your neighbor, or buy from your neighbor, let no man oppress his neighbor. **read ›**

44 **Leviticus 25:27** then he shall count the years since he sold it, and pay back the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, and he shall return to his possession. **read ›**

45 **Leviticus 25:28** But if he does not prosper enough to repay him, what he sold shall remain with the one who bought it until the sixth year of the release; and it shall go out in the release, and he shall return to his possession. **read ›**

46 **Leviticus 25:46** You shall divide them among your children after you, and they shall be your possession forever. But as for your brothers, the children of Israel, no one shall wear his brother down with toil. **read ›**

47 **Leviticus 27:21** But when the release has gone out, the field shall be holy to the Lord, like land set apart; it shall be the priest's possession. **read ›**

48 **Numbers 18:5** And you shall keep the charge of the holy things and the charge of the altar, and there shall be no wrath among the children of Israel. **read ›**

49 **Numbers 26:56** By lot you shall divide their inheritance between the many and the few." **read ›**

50 **Numbers 27:16** "Let the Lord God of the spirits and of all flesh select a man over this congregation, **read ›**

51 **Numbers 27:17** who shall go out before them and who shall come in before them, who shall lead them out and who shall bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep that have no shepherd." **read ›**

52 **Numbers 36:2** and they said, "The Lord commanded our lord to give the land of inheritance by lot to the children of Israel; and the Lord commanded our lord to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother to his daughters. **read ›**

53 **Numbers 36:7** So no inheritance of the children of Israel shall pass from tribe to tribe; for the children of Israel shall each hold fast to the inheritance of the tribe of his family. **read ›**

54 **Deuteronomy 10:9** Therefore the Levites have no portion or inheritance among their brothers; the Lord himself is Levi's inheritance, as he said to him. **read ›**

55 **Deuteronomy 15:14** You shall surely supply him with provisions for the journey from your flock, from your grain, and from your wine; as the Lord your God has blessed you, you shall give to him. **read ›**

56 **Deuteronomy 18:2** They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the Lord himself is his inheritance, as he told him. **read ›**

57 **Deuteronomy 18:8** He shall eat an allotted portion, besides what he gets from the sale of his family property. **read ›**

58 **Deuteronomy 19:14** You shall not move your neighbor's boundaries, which your fathers set in the inheritance that you received in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an allotment. **read ›**

59 **Deuteronomy 20:6** And what man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not enjoyed it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the war and another man enjoy it. **read ›**

60 **Deuteronomy 25:4** You shall not muzzle an ox while it threshes. **read ›**

61 **Deuteronomy 32:9** And his people Jacob became the Lord's portion; Israel, the measured line of his inheritance. **read ›**

62 **Joshua 13:14** To the tribe of Levi alone no inheritance was given; the Lord God of Israel himself is their inheritance, as the Lord said to them. And this is the division that Moses made for the children of Israel in Araboth of Moab, beyond the Jordan by Jericho. **read ›**

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63 **Joshua 22:19** And now, if the land of your possession is too small, cross over into the land of the Lord's possession, where the tabernacle of the Lord dwells, and take an inheritance among us. Do not become rebels against God, and do not revolt from the Lord, by building an altar apart from the altar of the Lord our God. **read ›**

64 **1 Samuel 6:7** So now take and make a new wagon, and two cows that have calved for the first time, without their calves; and yoke the cows to the wagon, and take their calves back home from behind them. **read ›**

65 **1 Samuel 8:14** He will take your fields, your vineyards, and your good olive groves, and give them to his slaves. **read ›**

66 **1 Samuel 8:16** He will take your slaves and your female slaves, your good herds and your donkeys, and he will take a tenth of them for his works. **read ›**

67 **1 Samuel 8:17** He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves shall be his slaves. **read ›**

68 **1 Kings 22:17** And he said, "Not so. I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like a flock that has no shepherd. And the Lord said, 'Is not God lord of these? Let each one return to his house in peace.'" **read ›**

69 **2 Kings 6:7** And he said, "Lift it up for yourself." And he stretched out his hand and took it. **read ›**

70 **2 Kings 12:6** But in the twenty-third year of King Joash the priests had not repaired the bedek of the house. (Septuagint 4 Kingdoms 12:7 (2 Kings 12:6 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

71 **2 Kings 12:12** and to the masons and the stonecutters, to buy timber and cut stone to repair the bedek of the house of the Lord, for all that was spent on the house to strengthen it. (Septuagint 4 Kingdoms 12:13 (2 Kings 12:12 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

72 **1 Chronicles 9:27** for the charge was theirs; and they were over the keys, to open the doors of the temple morning by morning. **read ›**

73 **2 Chronicles 31:16** besides the offspring of the males from three years old and upward, to every one who entered the house of the Lord, by a daily account, for ministry in the daily courses of their arrangement. **read ›**

74 **2 Chronicles 34:17** They have melted down the money that was found in the house of the Lord and given it into the hand of the overseers and into the hand of those who do the work." **read ›**

75 **Ezra 1:8** Cyrus king of the Persians brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the gasbarene, and he counted them out to Sheshbazzar the ruler of Judah. **read ›**

76 **Ezra 7:2** the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, **read ›**

77 **Ezra 9:4** Then everyone who followed the word of the God of Israel gathered to me because of the faithlessness of the exiles; and I sat still in silence until the evening sacrifice. **read ›**

78 **Job 11:13** For if you have made your heart pure, and stretch out your hands toward him, **read ›**

79 **Psalms 1:6** For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish. **read ›**

80 **Psalms 135:12** and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to Israel his people. (Septuagint Psalm 134:12 (Psalm 135:12 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

81 **Proverbs 6:24** to guard you from a woman under a husband, and from the slander of another's tongue. **read ›**

82 **Proverbs 10:32** The lips of righteous men drip graces, but the mouth of the ungodly is turned away. **read ›**

83 **Proverbs 15:33** The fear of the Lord is instruction and wisdom, and the beginning of glory will correspond to it. **read ›**

84 **Proverbs 27:13** Take away his garment, for an arrogant man has passed by, who ruins what belongs to others. **read ›**

85 **Jeremiah 15:5** Who will spare you, O Jerusalem? And who will be afraid for you? Or who will turn back to you for peace? **read ›**

86 **Lamentations 5:2** Our inheritance has been turned over to foreigners, our houses to strangers. **read ›**

87 **Ezekiel 24:2** Son of man, write down for yourself a day, from this day on which the king of Babylon leaned against Jerusalem, from this very day. **read ›**

88 **Ezekiel 44:8** and you appointed the keeping of the charges in my sanctuary. **read ›**

89 **Ezekiel 46:17** But if he gives a gift to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of release, and then he shall give it back to the leader; only the inheritance of his sons shall remain theirs. **read ›**

90 **Ezekiel 46:18** And the leader shall by no means take from the inheritance of the people, to oppress them; from his own possession he shall give an inheritance to his sons, so that my people may not be scattered, each from his possession. **read ›**

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91 **Daniel 11:29** At the set time he shall return and come into the south; but the last shall not be like the first. **read ›**

92 **Habakkuk 2:17** For the ungodliness of Lebanon will cover you, and the misery of wild beasts will terrify you, because of the blood of men, and the ungodliness of the land and the city and all who dwell in it. **read ›**

93 **Malachi 2:6** The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found on his lips; he walked with me in peace, walking uprightly, and he turned many from unrighteousness. **read ›**

94 **1 Esdras 5:54** They gave money to the stonecutters and carpenters, and drink and food, **read ›**

95 **1 Esdras 6:29** and that from the tribute of Coelesyria and Phoenicia a portion be given carefully to these men for sacrifices to the Lord, to Zerubbabel the governor, for bulls and rams and lambs; **read ›**

96 **1 Esdras 7:2** supervised the holy works very carefully, working together with the elders of the Jews and the temple officials. **read ›**

97 **1 Esdras 8:59** Keep watch and guard them until you deliver them to the chiefs of the priests and the Levites and to the leaders of the families of Israel in Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of our God." **read ›**

98 **1 Esdras 9:4** and that whoever did not come within two or three days, according to the judgment of the ruling elders, should have his cattle given over to the temple, and he himself should be cut off from the multitude of the captivity. **read ›**

99 **Tobit 1:6** But I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, as it is written for all Israel by an everlasting statute, having the firstfruits and the tithes of the produce and the first shearings; and I gave them, from all the produce, to the priests, the sons of Aaron, for the altar. **read ›**

100 **Judith 11:13** And they have decided to use up the firstfruits of the grain and the tithes of the wine and the oil, which they had sanctified and kept for the priests who stand in Jerusalem before the face of our God — things that none of the people should even touch with their hands. **read ›**

101 **Wisdom of Sirach 4:30** Do not be like a lion in your house, or full of suspicion among your household slaves. **read ›**

102 **Wisdom of Sirach 7:4** Do not seek from the Lord a position of leadership, nor from the king a seat of glory. **read ›**

103 **Wisdom of Sirach 8:13** Do not guarantee debts beyond your power; and if you guarantee them, take care as one who must repay. **read ›**

104 **Wisdom of Sirach 9:6** Do not give your soul to prostitutes, lest you lose your inheritance. **read ›**

105 **Wisdom of Sirach 35:1** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

106 **Wisdom of Sirach 38:20** Do not give your heart over to sorrow; put it away, remembering the last things. **read ›**

107 **Wisdom of Sirach 42:3** of reckoning with a partner and with travelers, and of giving the inheritance of companions; **read ›**

108 **Wisdom of Sirach 45:22** But in the land of the people he shall have no inheritance, and there is no portion for him among the people; for he himself is your portion and inheritance. **read ›**

109 **Baruch 2:19** For it is not on account of the righteous deeds of our fathers and our kings that we lay our plea for mercy before you, O Lord our God; **read ›**

110 **Letter of Jeremiah 1:59** So it is better to be a king who shows his own courage, or a useful vessel in a house which its owner will use, than the false gods; or even a door in a house, keeping safe what is in it, than the false gods; or a wooden pillar in a palace, than the false gods. **read ›**

111 **1 Maccabees 6:24** The sons of our people besiege the citadel, and for this reason they have also turned against us; moreover, as many of us as were found were put to death, and our inheritances were plundered. **read ›**

112 **1 Maccabees 10:32** I also give up my authority over the citadel in Jerusalem and give it to the high priest, so that he may station in it men of his own choosing to guard it. **read ›**

113 **1 Maccabees 10:41** And from now on they shall give for the works of the house all the surplus that the officials did not pay in, as in the former years. **read ›**

114 **1 Maccabees 14:42** and that he should be general over them, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, to appoint men over its works and over the country and over the weapons and over the strongholds; **read ›**

115 **1 Maccabees 15:33** Simon answered and said to him, "We have neither taken foreign land nor seized what belongs to others, but the inheritance of our fathers, which at one time was unjustly seized by our enemies. **read ›**

116 **1 Maccabees 15:34** Now that we have the opportunity, we are holding firmly to the inheritance of our fathers. **read ›**

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117 **2 Maccabees 2:29** For just as the master builder of a new house must take thought for the whole structure, while the one who undertakes to decorate and paint it must look for what is suitable for its adornment, so I think it is with us. **read ›**

118 **2 Maccabees 8:28** After the Sabbath they gave some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans, and the rest they divided among themselves and the children. **read ›**

119 **2 Maccabees 11:23** Now that our father has passed on to the gods, we wish the subjects of the kingdom to be free from disturbance and to attend to their own affairs. **read ›**

120 **1 Enoch 89:29** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

121 **1 Enoch 89:59** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

122 **1 Enoch 89:61** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

123 **1 Enoch 90:22** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

124 **Mark 11:3** If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it,' and he will immediately send it here." **read ›**

125 **Mark 12:1** He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a pit for the winepress, built a tower, rented it to farmers, and went abroad. **read ›**

126 **Mark 12:7** But those farmers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' **read ›**

127 **Mark 12:9** What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers, and will give the vineyard to others. **read ›**

128 **Luke 11:4** And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" **read ›**

129 **Luke 11:15** But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons." **read ›**

130 **Luke 11:16** Others, testing him, sought from him a sign from heaven. **read ›**

131 **Luke 19:33** As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" **read ›**

132 **Luke 22:25** He said to them, "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called 'benefactors.' **read ›**

133 **John 10:12** He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees. The wolf snatches the sheep and scatters them. **read ›**

134 **John 10:13** The hired hand flees because he is a hired hand and does not care for the sheep. **read ›**

135 **Acts 4:35** and laid them at the apostles' feet. They were distributed to each as anyone had need. **read ›**

136 **Acts 14:23** They appointed elders for them in every church and, after prayer with fasting, commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. **read ›**

137 **Acts 20:28** Therefore pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock among whom the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to shepherd the church of the Lord and God, which he purchased with his own blood. **read ›**

138 **Acts 24:2** When Paul was called, Tertullus began his accusation, saying, "Since through you we enjoy much peace, and through your foresight good things are being accomplished for this nation, **read ›**

139 **Romans 3:15** their feet are swift to shed blood; **read ›**

140 **Romans 4:17** As it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations." This is in the presence of him whom he believed: God, who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not, as though they were. **read ›**

141 **1 Corinthians 9:13** Do you not know that those who perform the sacred duties eat from the temple, and those who attend the altar share in what is offered on the altar? **read ›**

142 **2 Corinthians 5:2** For in this we also groan, longing to put on our dwelling from heaven, **read ›**

143 **Galatians 4:1** But I say that so long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, though he is lord of all, **read ›**

144 **1 Timothy 3:5** but if someone does not know how to rule his own house, how will he care for the church of God? **read ›**

145 **1 Timothy 5:17** Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching. **read ›**

146 **Titus 1:7** For a bishop must be blameless as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for dishonest gain, **read ›**

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147 **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they watch on behalf of your souls, as those who will give account, that they may do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be unprofitable for you. **read ›**

148 **1 Peter 5:1** I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings, and a partaker of the glory to be revealed: **read ›**

149 **1 Peter 5:2** shepherd the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion, but voluntarily; not for dishonest gain, but willingly; **read ›**

150 **1 Peter 5:3** not as lording it over those entrusted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *85 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Psalms 23:4

Proverbs 11:25

Song of Solomon 2:16

Isaiah 66:2

Jeremiah 1:5

Matthew 5:42 · 9:2 · 9:12 · 10:19 · 10:33 · 10:39 · 12:29 · 12:31 · 12:32 · 13:27 · 18:10 · 18:12 · 18:22 · 20:25 · 22:39 · 23:6 · 24:5 · 24:12 · 24:24

Mark 5:34 · 8:38 · 9:50 · 12:39

Luke 5:20 · 10:16 · 10:34 · 11:43 · 12:21 · 12:48 · 14:26 · 15:1 · 15:4 · 16:1 · 16:9 · 16:15 · 18:8 · 19:10 · 20:46 · 21:14

John 6:27 · 6:29 · 7:37 · 10:11 · 15:1 · 15:12 · 21:17

Acts 4:32 · 20:29

Romans 2:4 · 2:21 · 16:21

1 Corinthians 1:9 · 1:21 · 9:9 · 10:26 · 12:3

Galatians 1:10 · 2:17 · 6:1 · 6:2

Ephesians 4:27 · 5:27

Colossians 1:15

1 Thessalonians 5:12 · 5:13

2 Thessalonians 2:3 · 3:6

1 Timothy 2:4 · 3:1 · 3:4 · 5:21

2 Timothy 2:20 · 4:6

James 1:12 · 5:4

1 Peter 1:19 · 2:9 · 5:4

Revelation 2:5 · 3:12

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Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “What does it mean that elders are caretakers, not owners, of the church (1 Peter 5:2–3)?” on July 31, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY