THE QUESTION

Who were the leaders of the early church?

Asked by a THF member on May 18, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 11 numbered quotations · the 39 early Christian passages and 210 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/who-were-the-leaders-of-the-early-church

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

The first leaders were the apostles, sent by Christ. The early writers say the apostles then appointed bishops, presbyters and deacons in each church, and named men such as Linus, Clement and Polycarp as bishops who followed them. These leaders were to be proven men who kept the apostles' teaching.

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 7

Christ sent the apostles to lead first

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

Clement of Rome describes an ordered chain: God sent Christ, and Christ sent the apostles. As they preached from city to city, the apostles tested their first converts by the Spirit and made them bishops and deacons for the believers who would come later.

1

"Christ was therefore sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ. Both these appointments were made in an orderly way, according to the will of God."

later in the same passage

"Thus, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits of their labors, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who would later believe."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Rome,** *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Source 38, page 8** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

God gave apostles, prophets and teachers

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

Clement of Alexandria and Irenaeus both repeat Paul's list of the gifts God placed in the Church, with apostles named first. They treat these ministries as God's gift for building up the whole body of Christ.

2

"God gave to the Church some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 1.1 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 20, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

3

"Paul, teaching us where to find such people, says, "God has placed in the Church, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers.""

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 14, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 7

Each church had bishop, presbyters and deacons

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

Ignatius of Antioch writes to a local church as if its leadership were already settled: one bishop, a group of presbyters, and deacons. He compares the bishop to God's place and the presbyters to the circle of the apostles, and he urges unity with them.

4 “Since therefore I have, in the people previously mentioned, seen all of you in faith and love, I urge you to strive to do everything with a divine harmony, while your bishop leads in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time and was revealed in the end.”

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

5 “For there is one flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His blood, which was shed for us, is one; one loaf is also broken for all, and one cup is shared among them all: there is only one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants.”

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

POINT 4 OF 7

Named bishops followed the apostles

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

Irenaeus lists the bishops of Rome in order, starting with Linus, then Anacletus, then Clement, who had known the apostles. Tertullian adds that the church of Smyrna traced its bishop Polycarp to John, and Rome traced Clement to Peter.

6 “The blessed apostles, having established and built up the Church, entrusted the role of the episcopate to Linus.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book III* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 13, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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7 “The church of Smyrna records that Polycarp was placed there by John. In the same way, the church of Rome says that Clement was ordained by Peter.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tertullian,** *On Prescription Against Heretics* 32 (c. 196–220 AD) **Source 24, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 5 OF 7

Leaders had to be proven and worthy

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

The Didache tells churches to choose bishops and deacons of good character, not lovers of money. It adds that these men also do the work of prophets and teachers, so they should be honored, not looked down on.

8 “Therefore, appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons who are worthy of the Lord: men who are gentle, not lovers of money, truthful, and proven.”

later in the same passage

“For they also carry out for you the service of prophets and teachers. So do not despise them, because they are your honored ones, along with the prophets and teachers.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Didache,** *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 15 (c. 50–120 AD) **Source 1, page 6** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 6 OF 7

True leaders kept the apostles' teaching

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

Irenaeus says believers should listen to the presbyters who stand in the line from the apostles, but only where sound life and pure teaching go together. He warns against those who break away from that line.

9 “Therefore, where the gifts of the Lord have been placed, we must learn the truth from those who possess the succession of the Church from the apostles, and among whom is found conduct that is sound and blameless, as well as speech that is unadulterated and incorrupt.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 14, page 6** Read it in the library ›
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10 “Therefore, it is necessary to obey the presbyters in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, along with the succession of the episcopate, have received the certain gift of truth, according to the good pleasure of the Father.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book IV* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 17, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 7 OF 7

Office did not replace a holy life

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

Clement of Alexandria adds a warning: a man is not righteous just because he holds the title of presbyter. In God's eyes a true presbyter is one who does and teaches what belongs to the Lord.

11 “He is not such because men ordained him, nor is he considered righteous because he is a presbyter. Rather, he is counted among the presbyters because he is righteous.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Clement of Alexandria,** *Stromata* 6.13 (c. 190–215 AD) **Source 21, page 7** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not give a full list of every early leader in every city.
- They do not settle every detail of how the roles of bishop and presbyter related in the very first years.
- 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 39 early Christian passages and 210 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–39, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (sources 40–150, in Bible order), then 99 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are

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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 *39 passages from 11 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · sources 1–2*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 15 (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 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 ›**

2 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 11 (1885 English; on point 2) "concerning the apostles and prophets, according to the decree of the Gospel, thus do… [continues online] **read ›**

Hermas, *c. 90–150 AD · sources 3–4*

3 *Shepherd* "the forty are the apostles and teachers of the preaching of the Son of God… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Shepherd* (on point 5) "listen about the stones in the building. Those square white stones that fit exactly together are apostles, bishops, teachers, and deacons. They have lived in godly purity, and they have… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 5–12*

5 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* **Quote 5, page 3** "also broken for all, and one cup is shared among them all: there is only one altar for the whole Church, and one bishop, with the presbytery and deacons, my… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (1885 English) **Quote 4, page 3** "therefore I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the whole multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (on point 3) "deacons to the presbyters; the presbyters to the bishop… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Epistle to the Magnesians* (on point 3) "being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only-begotten Son, and… [continues online] **read ›**

9 *Epistle to the Philadelphians* (on point 3) flee to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus Christ, and to the apostles as the presbytery of the Church. I also love the prophets as those who announced… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Epistle to the Trallians* (1885 English; on point 3) "like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English; on point 3) presbyters, "feed the flock which is among you," till God shall show who is to hold the rule over you… [continues online] **read ›**

12 *Epistles of Ignatius* (on point 3) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." Presbyters, be subject to the bishop; deacons, to the presbyters; and you… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 13–17*

13 *Against Heresies: Book III* **Quote 6, page 3** blessed apostles, having established and built up the Church, entrusted the role of the episcopate to Linus. Paul mentions Linus in the Epistles to Timothy. Anacletus succeeded him, and after… [continues online] **read ›**

14 *Against Heresies: Book IV* (1885 English) **Quotes 3, 9, pages 2, 4** "prophets; thirdly, teachers." Where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behoves us to learn the truth, [namely,] from those who possess that succession of the… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English; on point 2) "in the Church," it is said, "God hath set apostles, prophets, teachers," and all the other means through which the Spirit works… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *Against Heresies: Book III* (on point 4) was also appointed by apostles in Asia to be the bishop of the Church in Smyrna. I saw him in my early youth, for he lived a very long time… [continues online] **read ›**

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17 *Against Heresies: Book IV* **Quote 10, page 5** "it is necessary to obey the presbyters in the Church—those who, as I have shown, possess the succession from the apostles; those who, along with the succession of the… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 18–21*

18 *Stromata* 4.21 (on point 2) "exercises of gnostic discipline. And since the almighty God Himself gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints… [continues online] **read ›**

19 *Stromata* 6.13 (on point 3) "according to my opinion, the grades here in the Church, of bishops… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Stromata* 1.1 **Quote 2, page 2** "gave to the Church some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Stromata* 6.13 (1885 English) **Quote 11, page 5** an one is in reality a presbyter of the Church, and a true minister (deacon) of the will of God, if he do and teach what is the Lord's… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 22–24*

22 *On Prescription Against Heretics* 22 (on point 1) "anything withheld from the knowledge of Peter, who is called the rock on which the church should be… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Against Marcion* 3 (1885 English; on point 1) "then, even if he censures Peter and John and James, who were thought to be pillars, it is for a manifest reason… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *On Prescription Against Heretics* 32 **Quote 7, page 4** "if there are any heresies bold enough to place themselves in the middle of the apostolic age, so that they may seem to have been handed down by the apostles… [continues online] **read ›**

Novatian, *c. 240–258 AD · source 25*

25 *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* 29 (on point 2) "is He who places prophets in the Church, instructs teachers, directs tongues, gives powers and healings, does wonderful… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 26–28*

26 *Epistles* (on point 1) were in one place." We see that this was observed by the apostles not only in the ordination of bishops and priests, but also in that of deacons. About this… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Epistles* (on point 1) "But deacons ought to remember that the Lord chose apostles, that is, bishops and overseers… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Treatises* (1885 English) "upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 29–36*

29 *Apostolic Constitutions* "yourselves are not ignorant of them. For you certainly know that those named by us bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, were made so by prayer and by the laying on… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 1) more able to deceive people, and the whole Church was in danger, we twelve gathered together in Jerusalem. Matthias had been chosen as an apostle in place of the betrayer… [continues online] **read ›**

31 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 5) we, the twelve apostles of the Lord, who are now together, give you these divine constitutions concerning every form of the church. Paul, the chosen vessel, our fellow apostle, is… [continues online] **read ›**

32 *Apostolic Constitutions* "Concerning the ordination of presbyters, I who am loved by the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

33 *Apostolic Constitutions* "die." Therefore, bishop, understand the dignity of your office. As you have received the power of binding, so you have also received the power of loosing. Since you have the… [continues online] **read ›**

34 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) "lays on hands, ordains, offers, receives the blessing from bishops, but by no means from presbyters… [continues online] **read ›**

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35 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 5) have already said, that a bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon, when they are constituted, must be but once married, whether their wives be alive or whether they be dead… [continues online] **read ›**

36 *Apostolic Constitutions* Therefore, O bishop, make every effort to be pure in your actions, and to honor your place and dignity. It is the place of one who bears the character of… [continues online] **read ›**

Peter of Alexandria, *c. 300–311 AD · source 37*

37 *Canonical Epistle* (1885 English; on point 1) "he brings forward the example of the apostles, of Stephen, of James, and the chiefs of the order, Peter and Paul… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Rome · *sources 38–39*

38 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* **Quote 1, page 2** "Thus, preaching through countries and cities, they appointed the first-fruits of… [continues online] **read ›**

39 *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (on point 4) 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 *111 verses, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

40 **Exodus 29:30** The priest from among his sons who succeeds him, who goes into the tabernacle of witness to minister in the holy place, shall put them on for seven days. **read ›**

41 **Exodus 37:12** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

42 **Leviticus 16:32** The priest whom they anoint, and whose hands they consecrate to serve as priest after his father, shall make atonement; he shall put on the linen garment, the holy garment. **read ›**

43 **Leviticus 21:10** And the high priest among his brothers, on whose head the anointing oil has been poured, and who has been consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor tear his garments; **read ›**

44 **Numbers 1:16** These are those called from the congregation, leaders of the tribes by their families; they are commanders of thousands in Israel. **read ›**

45 **Numbers 11:16** Then the Lord said to Moses, "Gather to me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you yourself know to be elders of the people and their scribes; and bring them to the tabernacle of witness, and they shall stand there with you. **read ›**

46 **Numbers 11:24** So Moses went out and spoke the words of the Lord to the people; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and set them all around the tabernacle. **read ›**

47 **Numbers 15:23** just as the Lord commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the Lord gave the command to you and onward throughout your generations, **read ›**

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

49 **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 ›**

50 **Deuteronomy 1:13** Choose for yourselves wise, knowledgeable, and understanding men from your tribes, and I will appoint them over you as your leaders." **read ›**

51 **1 Kings 7:7** And the porch of the thrones, where he would judge, was the porch of judgment. (Septuagint 3 Kingdoms 7:44 (1 Kings 7:7 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

52 **1 Kings 7:27** He made ten bronze bases. Each base was five cubits long, four cubits wide, and six cubits high. (Septuagint 3 Kingdoms 7:14 (1 Kings 7:27 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

53 **2 Kings 25:16** the two pillars, the one sea, and the bases that Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; there was no weighing the bronze of all these vessels. **read ›**

54 **1 Chronicles 9:13** and their brothers, heads of the houses of their families, one thousand seven hundred and sixty, mighty men of valor for the work of the service of the house of God. **read ›**

55 **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 ›**

56 **2 Chronicles 3:17** He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right and the other on the left; and he called the name of the one on the right Establishment, and the name of the one on the left Strength. **read ›**

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57 **Ezra 1:2** “Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord God of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea. **read ›**

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

59 **Nehemiah 12:11** and Joiada fathered Jonathan, and Jonathan fathered Jaddua. (Septuagint 2 Esdras 22:11 (Nehemiah 12:11 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

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

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

62 **Proverbs 14:19** The evil will fall before the good, and the ungodly will wait at the doors of the righteous. **read ›**

63 **Proverbs 16:20** He who is understanding in affairs finds good things, but he who trusts in God is to be counted blessed. **read ›**

64 **Proverbs 16:24** Good words are honeycombs, and their sweetness is healing for the soul. **read ›**

65 **Ecclesiastes 3:9** What advantage does the worker have in that at which he labors? **read ›**

66 **Song of Solomon 1:9** To my mare among Pharaoh’s chariots I have compared you, my companion. **read ›**

67 **Isaiah 22:22** And I will give him the glory of David, and he will rule, and there will be no one to speak against him; and I will give him the key of the house of David upon his shoulder; and he will open, and there will be no one to shut; and he will shut, and there will be no one to open. **read ›**

68 **Lamentations 1:3** Gimel. Judea has been carried away because of her humiliation and because of the greatness of her slavery; she dwells among the nations, she has found no rest; all her pursuers have overtaken her in the midst of her oppressors. **read ›**

69 **Joel 3:10** Beat your plowshares into swords and your sickles into spears; let the weak say, “I am strong.” (Septuagint Joel 4:10 (Joel 3:10 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

70 **Amos 6:3** You who are coming to the evil day, who draw near and lay hold of false Sabbaths, **read ›**

71 **Micah 1:15** until they bring the heirs, O inhabitant of Lachish; the inheritance will come as far as Adullam, the glory of the daughter of Israel. **read ›**

72 **Nahum 3:11** And you will be drunk, and you will be overlooked, and you will seek for yourself a place to stand from your enemies. **read ›**

73 **1 Esdras 1:2** having set the priests in their robes by their daily courses in the temple of the Lord. **read ›**

74 **1 Esdras 5:40** And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should arise clothed with the Manifestation and the Truth. **read ›**

75 **1 Esdras 7:2** supervised the holy works very carefully, working together with the elders of the Jews and the temple officials. **read ›**

76 **1 Esdras 8:46** commanding them to speak to Loddaeus and his brothers and the treasurers at that place, to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. **read ›**

77 **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 ›**

78 **1 Esdras 8:81** to give us food, and to glorify the temple of our Lord, and to raise up desolate Zion, to give us a firm hold in Judea and Jerusalem. **read ›**

79 **1 Esdras 9:38** And the whole multitude gathered together in the open square before the gate of the temple toward the east, **read ›**

80 **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 ›**

81 **Wisdom of Solomon 6:3** For your dominion was given you by the Lord, and your sovereignty by the Most High, who will examine your works and search out your plans. **read ›**

82 **Wisdom of Solomon 10:2** and gave him strength to rule over all things. **read ›**

83 **Wisdom of Sirach 10:20** Among brothers their leader is honored, and those who fear the Lord in his eyes. **read ›**

84 **Wisdom of Sirach 36:20** A crooked heart will give sorrow, but a man of much experience will repay him. (Septuagint Wisdom of Sirach 36:25 (Wisdom of Sirach 36:20 in most Bibles)) **read ›**

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85 **Wisdom of Sirach 45:15** Moses filled his hands and anointed him with holy oil; it became for him an everlasting covenant, and for his seed for the days of heaven, to minister to the Lord and to serve as priest together, and to bless his people in his name. **read ›**

86 **Wisdom of Sirach 45:17** In his commandments he gave him authority in covenants of judgments, to teach Jacob the testimonies and to enlighten Israel in his law. **read ›**

87 **Wisdom of Sirach 48:8** you anointed kings for retribution, and prophets as successors after him; **read ›**

88 **Baruch 1:16** and to our kings and to our rulers and to our priests and to our prophets and to our fathers, **read ›**

89 **Susanna 1:34** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

90 **1 Maccabees 3:55** After this Judas appointed leaders of the people, commanders of thousands and of hundreds and of fifties and of tens. **read ›**

91 **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 ›**

92 **1 Maccabees 11:27** He confirmed him in the high priesthood and in all the other honors he had held before, and had him counted among his first friends. **read ›**

93 **1 Maccabees 14:19** And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem. **read ›**

94 **1 Maccabees 14:38** And King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood accordingly, **read ›**

95 **1 Maccabees 14:41** and that the Jews and the priests were well pleased that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a faithful prophet should arise; **read ›**

96 **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 ›**

97 **1 Maccabees 15:34** Now that we have the opportunity, we are holding firmly to the inheritance of our fathers. **read ›**

98 **1 Maccabees 16:20** He sent others to take Jerusalem and the temple mount. **read ›**

99 **1 Maccabees 16:24** behold, these are written in the book of the days of his high priesthood, from the time he became high priest after his father. **read ›**

100 **2 Maccabees 3:9** When he had arrived at Jerusalem and had been kindly received by the high priest of the city, he told about the report that had been made and made clear why he had come; and he asked whether these things were really so. **read ›**

101 **2 Maccabees 4:42** As a result they wounded many of them and struck down some, and they put all the rest to flight; and they killed the temple robber himself beside the treasury. **read ›**

102 **3 Maccabees 1:9** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

103 **4 Maccabees 4:18** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

104 **1 Enoch 1:3** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

105 **1 Enoch 10:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

106 **1 Enoch 52:4** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

107 **1 Enoch 82:13** Open the verse to read it. **read ›**

108 **Matthew 16:19** And I shall give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.” **read ›**

109 **Matthew 18:18** Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. **read ›**

110 **Matthew 25:14** “For it is like a man going into another country, who called his own slaves and entrusted his goods to them. **read ›**

111 **Mark 3:15** and to have authority to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: **read ›**

112 **Luke 1:5** In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **read ›**

113 **Luke 3:7** He said therefore to the multitudes who went out to be baptized by him, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **read ›**

114 **Luke 16:2** He called him, and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give an accounting of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’ **read ›**

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115 **John 20:23** If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they have been retained." **read ›**

116 **Acts 1:13** When they came in, they went up to the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. **read ›**

117 **Acts 3:2** A man lame from his mother's womb was being carried. They laid him daily at the temple gate called Beautiful to ask alms from those entering the temple. **read ›**

118 **Acts 6:3** Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this work. **read ›**

119 **Acts 9:14** Here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." **read ›**

120 **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 ›**

121 **Acts 15:4** When they reached Jerusalem, the church, the apostles, and the elders welcomed them, and they reported all that God had done with them. **read ›**

122 **Acts 15:22** Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers. **read ›**

123 **Acts 20:17** From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. **read ›**

124 **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 ›**

125 **Acts 21:18** The day following, Paul went in with us to James; and all the elders were present. **read ›**

126 **Acts 22:21** He said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'" **read ›**

127 **Acts 22:22** They listened to him until this statement. Then they lifted up their voice, saying, "Away with such a man from the earth, for he is not fit to live!" **read ›**

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

129 **1 Corinthians 1:16** I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. **read ›**

130 **1 Corinthians 4:2** Moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful. **read ›**

131 **1 Corinthians 12:28** God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, and kinds of tongues. **read ›**

132 **1 Corinthians 12:29** Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all miracle workers? **read ›**

133 **2 Corinthians 1:8** For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of our trouble which came upon us in Asia: we were weighed down beyond measure, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. **read ›**

134 **Galatians 1:18** Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days. **read ›**

135 **Galatians 2:9** and when they perceived the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, those who were reputed to be pillars, gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision. **read ›**

136 **Ephesians 2:20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, **read ›**

137 **Ephesians 4:11** He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; **read ›**

138 **1 Timothy 2:7** for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie—a teacher of the Gentiles in faithfulness and truth. **read ›**

139 **1 Timothy 3:1** The saying is trustworthy: if anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a good work. **read ›**

140 **1 Timothy 3:2** The bishop therefore must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, self-controlled, orderly, hospitable, able to teach; **read ›**

141 **1 Timothy 4:14** Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the elders. **read ›**

142 **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 ›**

143 **2 Timothy 1:11** For this I was appointed as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. **read ›**

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144 **Titus 1:5** I left you in Crete for this reason, that you would set in order the things that were lacking and appoint elders in every city, as I directed you— **read ›**

145 **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 ›**

146 **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 ›**

147 **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 ›**

148 **1 Peter 5:3** not as lording it over those entrusted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock. **read ›**

149 **Revelation 20:1** I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. **read ›**

150 **Revelation 21:14** The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. **read ›**

ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *99 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.

Isaiah 60:17 · 63:3

Jeremiah 23:21

Matthew 5:6 · 8:15 · 10:5 · 10:40 · 12:31 · 13:11 · 16:18 · 17:1 · 18:10 · 21:32

Mark 3:29 · 4:34 · 7:9 · 12:39

Luke 8:17 · 10:16 · 11:23 · 12:2 · 12:47 · 12:48 · 12:50 · 20:46 · 24:27

John 10:16 · 13:25 · 14:16 · 14:18 · 15:20 · 16:12 · 16:13 · 19:26 · 20:22 · 21:15 · 21:20

Acts 1:8 · 1:20 · 2:17 · 9:5 · 10:13 · 10:34 · 11:15 · 14:4 · 15:1 · 15:7 · 15:9 · 15:13 · 15:23 · 16:4

Romans 8:7 · 8:9 · 10:4 · 13:14 · 16:7

1 Corinthians 2:12 · 6:10 · 7:40 · 9:22 · 9:25 · 10:20 · 12:3 · 12:8 · 14:2 · 14:33 · 15:5 · 15:6 · 15:41

2 Corinthians 4:8 · 4:13 · 6:3 · 7:1 · 13:1

Galatians 1:19 · 2:13 · 3:27 · 5:17 · 6:1

Ephesians 2:14 · 4:2 · 4:13

Philippians 1:18 · 2:2 · 3:16

1 Thessalonians 2:6 · 4:17

1 Timothy 3:4 · 4:1 · 5:9

2 Timothy 4:6

Titus 1:6 · 2:14

Hebrews 6:6 · 13:17

1 Peter 2:5

1 John 2:27

Revelation 4:4 · 11:16

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

ABOUT THIS STUDY

A THF member asked “Who were the leaders of the early church?” on May 18, 2026. The Historic Faith answered it as a public study on November 9, 2026.

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THE END OF THIS STUDY