

Qualifications for Church Leadership

1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

(32)

1 TIMOTHY: DUTIES AND ORDER IN THE CHURCH, 1 Timothy 2:1-3:13

The Overseers of the Church, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

(1 Timothy 3:1-7) **Introduction:** the office of *bishop* is probably the same office as **elder** or **presbyter** or **minister** in the New Testament. All three words refer to the same person, to the minister of the gospel and of the church.

- 1) What are the qualifications of the minister?
- 2) Who should be preaching the gospel and filling the pulpits of the Lord's church?
- 3) Who should be considering the ministry—what kind of person?

Before discussing the individual qualifications against which all pastors are to be measured, however, Paul gives some helpful insight into the call to spiritual leadership.

1. [The office of minister or bishop \(v.1\).](#)
2. [Personal qualifications \(v.2-3\).](#)
3. [Family qualifications: the minister or bishop must rule his own home \(v.4-5\).](#)
4. [Spiritual qualifications \(v.6\).](#)
5. [Community qualifications \(v.7\).](#)

4. (1 Timothy 3:6) Proven— Novice— Minister— Bishop— Elder: the minister or bishop of God must be spiritually qualified.

1 Timothy 3:6 (NASB)

⁶ *and not a new [novice] convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.*

Conceited is from **tuphoō**, which derives from a root word meaning “**smoke**.” The verb means “**to puff up like a cloud of smoke**.” Putting a new convert into a position of spiritual leadership is apt to puff him up, to put his head in the clouds.

That would place him in grave danger of falling **into the condemnation incurred by the devil**. That does not mean an individual is condemned by Satan, since the Bible never portrays him as a judge. It is best taken as an objective genitive; he falls into the same kind of judgment pronounced by God on Satan.

The context, which deals with the danger of pride, also lends support to that interpretation. The judgment or condemnation of the devil was a demotion from a high position due to his sinful pride. That is the danger awaiting the man placed in a position

of spiritual leadership before he is ready. As [Proverbs 16:18 \(NASB\)](#) warns, “**Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling.**”

It was pride that brought Satan down. Not content with being the highest ranking angel, he sought to exalt himself above God (cf. [Ezekiel 28:11-19](#); [Isaiah 14:12-14](#)).

[Ezekiel 28:11-19 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ Again the word of the LORD came to me saying,

¹² "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ "You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared.

¹⁴ "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you *there*. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you.

¹⁶ "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁷ "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you.

¹⁸ "By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you.

¹⁹ "All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever.'""

[Isaiah 14:12-14 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!

¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.

¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

The five “I wills” of [Isaiah 14:12-14](#) clearly show his pride. As a result, Satan, who had “the seal of perfection” and was “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” ([Ezekiel 28:12](#)), who had been on the “holy mountain of God” and served as “the anointed cherub who covers” ([Ezekiel 28:14](#)), was “cast... as profane from the mountain of God” ([Ezekiel 28:16](#); cf. [Revelation 12:9](#)).

Revelation 12:9 (NASB)

⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

What happened to Satan could easily happen to an immature Christian elevated to eldership. It is that danger which Paul warns Timothy against. The antidote to pride is humility, which is the mark of a spiritually mature leader ([Matthew 23:11-12](#)).

The church must not lift up those whom the Lord will later have to cut down.

Matthew 23:11-12 (NASB)

¹¹ "But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

¹² "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NASB)

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Proverbs 11:2 (NASB)

² When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 16:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 25:27 (NASB)

²⁷ It is not good to eat much honey, Nor is it glory to search out one's own glory.

Isaiah 14:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ "But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north.

¹⁴ 'I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Isaiah 47:10 (NASB)

¹⁰ You felt secure in your wickedness and said, 'No one sees me,' Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; For you have said in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one besides me.'

Ezekiel 28:2 (NASB)

²"Son of man, say to the leader of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because your heart is lifted up And you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods In the heart of the seas'; Yet you are a man and not God, Although you make your heart like the heart of God.

Obadiah 1:4 (NASB)

⁴"Though you build high like the eagle, Though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," declares the LORD.