

# ***They Watch Over Your Souls III***

Heb 13:17 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 for you. NASU

Let me ask you a very important question. Who is the person who will make the wisest decision about who should "watch over your souls"?

## **I. God Selects the One(s) He Wills to Watch Over Your Souls**

Prov 8:15-16

15 "***By me*** kings reign,  
And rulers decree justice.

16 "***By me*** princes rule, and nobles,  
All who judge rightly. NASU

### **Wooden Indian**

In 1883 in Allentown, New Jersey, a wooden Indian—the kind that was seen in front of cigar stores—was placed on the ballot for Justice of the Peace. The candidate was registered under the fictitious name of Abner Robbins. When the ballots were counted, Abner, the wooden Indian, won over the incumbent, Sam Davis, by 7 votes.

A similar thing happened in 1938. The name Boston Curtis appeared on the ballot for Republican Committeeman from Wilton, Washington. Actually, Boston Curtis was a mule. The town's mayor sponsored the animal to demonstrate that people know very little about the candidates. He proved his point. The mule won!

Regarding God's people, believers, His children...the Lord doesn't leave it up to creation to choose their own leader. He chooses who will lead His people and He does so with regard for His divinely wise plan and influenced by His Great Shepherd-like compassion for His people.

1 Sam 16:1-13 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for ***I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.***" 2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and ***you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.***" 4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" 5 He said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they entered, he looked at Eliab and thought, "***Surely the LORD'S anointed is before Him.***" 7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "***Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man***

**sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.**

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "**The LORD has not chosen this one either.**" 9 Next Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "**The LORD has not chosen this one either.**" 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "**The LORD has not chosen these.**" 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." 12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And **the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."** 13 Then **Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him** in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah. NASU

## II. The Lord Can Keep a Secret and He Selects Who He Reveals Things to

Prov 25:2 **It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,** NASU

Prov 11:13

13 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets ,  
But **he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.** NASU

### **Can You Keep a Secret?**

The Duke of Wellington is best remembered as the general who defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. During his earlier service in India, Wellington was in charge of negotiations after the battle of Assaye. The emissary of an Indian ruler, anxious to know what territories would be ceded to his master, tried in various ways to get the information. Finally, he offered Wellington a large sum of money. "Can you keep a secret?" asked Wellington. "Yes, indeed," the man said eagerly. "So can I," replied Wellington.

I remember when I was in the US Navy. I was a cryptologic technician. I won't even try and describe that means, but suffice it to say that I was cleared by the FBI and NSA (National Security Agency) to gather and handle top secret classified information. I enjoyed my job in the Navy and did reasonably well at my job. Though early on in my career I was pretty stubborn...one rule or principle regarding the handling of classified information that I came to appreciate later in my naval career was the "Need to Know" rule.

It goes like this...though I had access to classified information, even at the top secret level, that did not give me permission to see every piece of top secret material or information. The only classified material I was permitted to have access to was that information that I "Needed to Know" to do my job. If material was of a lower classification like confidential or secret, though I had a top secret clearance, if I did not "Need to Know" that confidential or secret information to do my job....I didn't have the "Need to Know" and I was not allowed to handle it. This was the US Government's way of limiting the damage a spy or even undisciplined individual could have on our nation by compartmentalizing all the material by the "Need to Know". The US Government was in absolute control as to who was

permitted to see what. At first, I was ticked off. As a young, arrogant, stubborn and self-centered sailor, I thought I deserved to see every bit of information...after all, I had a top secret clearance and I was a US citizen. But, the quicker I submitted to the truth that my job in the Navy, had certain limited responsibilities that needed only access to a limited amount of classified information, the more peaceful life became for me when I quit striving in my heart to have access to hidden classified information I didn't "need to know".

Notice who the Lord has the following conversation with and the content of that conversation...

1 Sam 16:1-3 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for **I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.**" 2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show **you...**"

### III. The Holy Spirit Reveals God's Thoughts & Plans

1 Cor 2:9-14 9

"THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,  
AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,  
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

10 For **to us God revealed them through the Spirit**, for **the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.** 11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so **the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.** 12 Now **we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,** 13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 14 But **a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. NASU

### IV. Justly, the Holy Spirit Entrusts God's Corporate Plans to those with the Authority to Carry Them Out (Leadership)

Luke 12:48 From **everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded**; and **from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**  
NIV

In other words, how unjust would God be to entrust His plans for a group of believers to people who had no authority, no decision-making authority to carry out His wishes. They would be held accountable for that which was revealed to them while having no ability to do anything with the information they had been given. God is just. He reveals His secrets to those who have the decision-making authority to carry out His plans. Thankfully, God's not like the unjust judges of the world...

### **Nobody's At Fault**

In 1980 a Boston court acquitted Michael Tindall of flying illegal drugs into the United States. Tindall's attorneys argued that he was a victim of "action addict syndrome," an emotional disorder that makes a person crave dangerous, thrilling situations. Tindall was not a drug dealer, merely a thrill seeker.

An Oregon man who tried to kill his ex-wife was acquitted on the grounds that he suffered from "depression-suicide syndrome," whose victims deliberately commit poorly planned crimes with the unconscious goal of being caught or killed. He didn't really want to shoot his wife; he wanted the police to shoot him.

Then there's the famous "Twinkie syndrome." Attorneys for Dan White, who murdered San Francisco mayor George Moscone, blamed the crime on emotional stress linked to White's junk food binges. White was acquitted of murder and convicted on a lesser charge of manslaughter.

Nowadays, nobody's at fault for anything.

1 Sam 16:1-13 1 Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for **I have selected a king for Myself among his sons.**" 2 But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3 "You shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and **I will show you** what you shall do; and **you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you.**"

The Lord had already relieved Saul of his office and his authority because of his unrepentant rebellion towards him. Israel is without a king, but not without a leader. Samuel, the judge of Israel operating temporarily as God's anointed leader of Israel until Israel's next king is identified and anointed, is shown by God who He has chosen as the next King of Israel. God showed it to the prophet, the judge, the leader Samuel.

Let's look at a New Testament example of God revealing His choice of elders to the leaders already in place...

Paul and Barnabas, the recognized leaders among the people of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, sought to hear the Lord in fasting and prayer regarding who the elders were to be in each of the churches. The Lord revealed it to Paul and Barnabas and they appointed the elders to lead the various churches.

Acts 14:19-23 19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 When **they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed**

**with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. NASU

Let's look at another New Testament example of how leaders were appointed...turn to Titus 1:5

Who is Titus? The Bible leads us to believe that Titus was a Gentile who came to the Lord through Apostle Paul. And that Titus was a man that had accompanied Apostle Paul from very early in Paul's walk with the Lord (Gal 2:2) in Antioch and Jerusalem. Titus was someone that Paul had imparted and invested his life into and at one point, Titus was left on the island of Crete by Apostle Paul, to lead the church there, and to continue the work that they started together in Crete on one of Paul's missionary journeys. Listen to some of the directions that Paul lays out for Titus, the leader of the church of Crete...

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that **you would set in order what remains and appoint elders** in every city as I directed you NASU

## **V. God Has Established the Elders as those He Chooses to Hold Accountable with Governing Authority for a Church**

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders (presbuteros - always translated elder in the NT) **who rule** (*proistemi* - see below) **well** be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching NASB

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders **who rule well** ... NKJV

1 Tim 5:17 The elders **who direct the affairs of the church well** ... NIV

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders **that rule well** ... KJV

1 Tim 5:17 Let the elders **who take the lead [among the saints] well** ... Darby

1 Tim 5:17 The **well-leading** elders... YLT

1 Tim 5:17 Elders **who provide effective leadership** ... NET Bible

1 Tim 5:17 The elders **who lead the church well** ... New Century Version