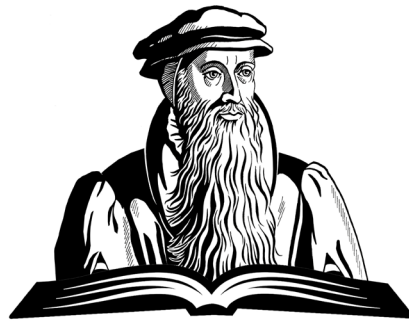


STUDY GUIDE for Biblical Eldership

VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

by Rev. Robert D. McCurley, ThM

Lecture #1 Introduction



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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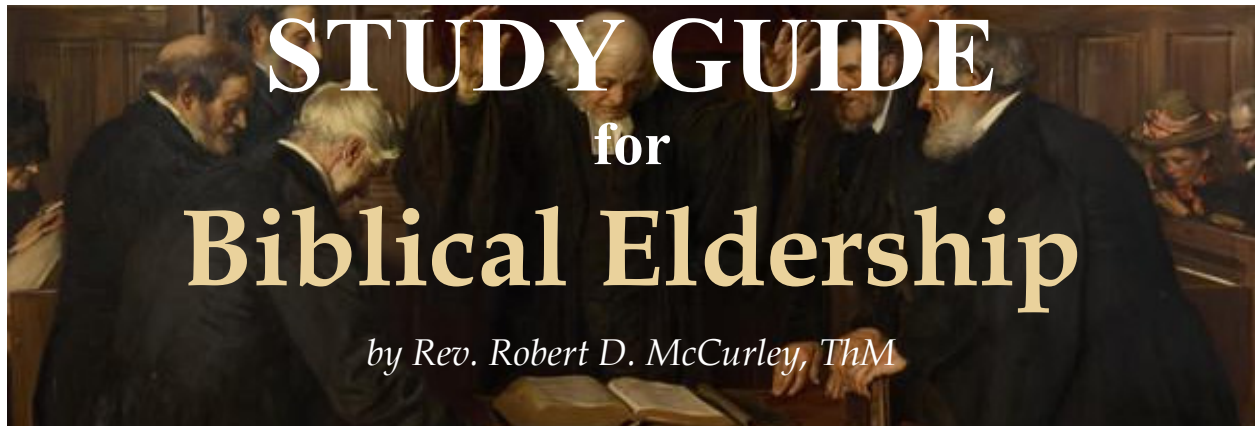
Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

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Cover image: “The Ordination of Elders in a Scottish Kirk,” 1891, John Henry Lorimer



1. Introduction

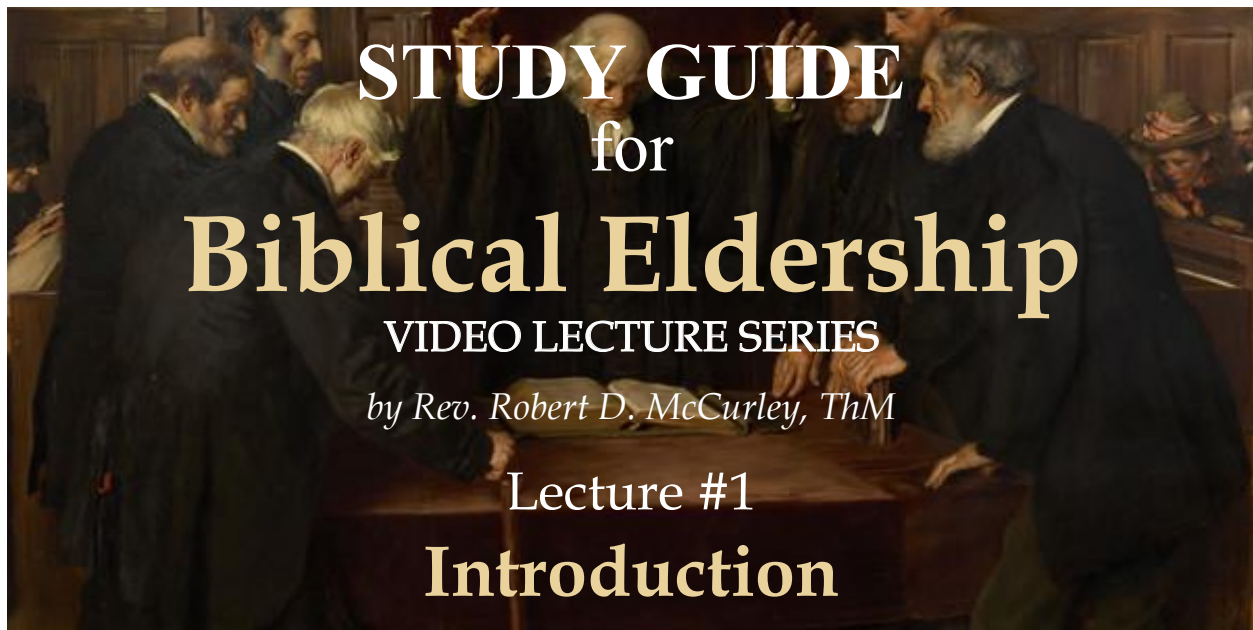
2. The Office

3. Qualifications

4. More Qualifications

5. Doctrine

6. Shepherding



Introduction

Throughout history, great institutions have come and gone. We read of the rise and fall of one great nation after another. When they rise to their height of power, they seem invincible, even as if they will remain forever. But then they fall and disappear from the earth, only to be read about in history books. Only one kingdom remains truly permanent and indestructible. Only one institution endures through all the ages, while everything else withers and dies, and that is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said himself, in Matthew 16:18, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” It endures throughout time and all of eternity. God reveals that the church is *the* central institution in the world, in history, and therefore, in our own understanding. One important component in the design of Christ’s church was his appointment of church government and church officers, including men to serve as his representatives, and as helpers to the edification of his people. That includes Elders, which is the subject of these lectures.

Key Points

1. The office of Elder in the church of Christ is an extremely high calling.
2. Overview of the entire lecture series:
 - Lectures 1 and 2—The biblical foundations for the office of the Elder.
 - Lectures 3, 4, and 5—The biblical qualifications of an Elder.
 - Lecture 6—The practical responsibilities of Elders in the life of the church.
3. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a kingdom.
 - a. Christ is her King—Jesus Christ alone is the King of Glory, and only Head of his church.
 - 1) God promised David he would raise up a mediator from his seed, a King, and a kingdom forever.

- 1) Christ excels all other kings—he is King of kings.
- 2) The Pope of Rome is not the head of the church, but an enemy of Christ.
- b. The kingdom—the divine institution established by God for the advance of his cause and the display of his glory in the world.
 - 1) The invisible church – all of the elect for all of time.
 - 2) The visible church – all professing believers and their children; they have the ministry, the oracles, and the ordinances of God (officers, ordinances, sacred institutions).
 - 3) The church is not a practical human convention.
- c. The government of this kingdom—the nature of church power.
 - 1) It is declarative, not legislative – “Thus saith the Lord.”
 - 2) It is ministerial, not magisterial.
 - 3) It is spiritual, not physical.
 - 4) It is judicial or disciplinary.
 - 5) It is not discretionary, only according to the Scriptures.
4. Conclusion – within these parameters lies the exercise of church authority under Christ.

Study Questions

1. Great institutions rise and fall, but what is the one most “central institution in the world”? Why do we conclude this?

2. Why does Rev. McCurley say that being an Elder in the New Testament church is “an extremely high calling”? Why is it higher than being in political office or the head of a giant corporation?

3. What three things did God promise to King David (2 Samuel 7:12–16)? What do all the kings of Israel and Judah point to?

4. What is the relationship between the passages in Daniel 7:13–14, and Daniel 2:4, and the great commission of Jesus Christ in the end of Matthew 28?

5. Since the Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of his church, what are the implications of his kingship and preeminence? How is this truth the starting point in understanding biblical Eldership?

6. How would you prove from Scripture that the church of Jesus Christ is a kingdom? What different names are used in the Bible to refer to the church as a kingdom?

7. What are the distinctions between the visible church and the invisible church? Are they two different churches? How does the visible church display the honor of Christ?

8. Is the church of Jesus Christ is just another a practical human convention or a practical way of organizing God's people? What kind of institution is it? Why does the Bible not permit believers to detach themselves from his visible and divinely-appointed church?

9. Where do the ordinances, structure, and government of the church of Jesus Christ come from? Are we free to innovate upon them or change them? How can we be sure to know them rightly?

10. What does the Bible tell us about the nature of church power? Please list and expound on each of them?

11. What does Rev. McCurley mean when he says, “The exercise of church authority under Christ reflects real power”? What are the implications of this statement?

Further Study

1. When considering church government, Rev. McCurley tells us, “We begin by putting Christ first...and giving Him all the preeminence that belongs to Him. We cannot do otherwise.” Why is this so important in the study of this topic?

2. What is the source of church power? How does this refresh your thoughts about church life and practical service in the church?
