The Eldership - 1
The Place of Elders in God's Chain of Authority in the Church

Introduction:
A. The church is not a democracy, but a monarchy.
   1. There is no voting authorized on Scriptures.
   2. The monarch has all authority (cf. Eph. 1:22-23).
B. There are two extremes about the authority of elders.
   1. Elders have no authority, only rule by example.
   2. Elders have near absolute authority, "lords over God's heritage.
C. The terms for elders give us some hint of the nature of their authority.
   1. Elder/Presbyter (presbuteros). (1 Tim. 4:14 kjv, nkjv)
      a. Emphasizes age, experience, wisdom.
      b. Non-technical and technical used of word (1 Tim. 5:1-2, 19-20)
   2. Bishop/Overseer (episkopos) (Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1).
      a. Emphasizes rule and authority.
      b. Same term applied to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:25)
   3. Pastor/Shepherd (poimen) (Eph. 4:11)
      a. Emphasizes care, direction, leadership, and authority.
      b. Same term applied to Jesus (1 Pet. 2:25)
   4. Note the interchangeability these terms. (Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2)
D. This lesson show God's chain of authority and elder's place in it.

Discussion:
I. God, the Father, at the Top.
   A. Jesus recognized Father's authority over him (John 12:45-50)
   B. God spoke through his Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
II. Father Delegated All Authority to Son. (Matt. 28:18).
   A. Father placed him about all powers after resurrection.
      1. Set him on David's throne (Acts 2:29-36)
      2. Set him above all powers and the church (Eph. 1:17-23).
      3. Only Father not under Son (1 Cor. 15:27)
   B. Son to deliver authority back to Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
III. Son Delegated Authority to Apostles (2 Cor 13:10)
   A. He made apostles equal in authority (Matt. 20:25-26)
   B. He exercises authority through apostolic word (John 17:8,18-20; Heb. 2:1-3).
      1. Orally and written during their lives.
      2. Written after their death.
      3. Apostolic writings at foundation of church (Eph. 2:20-3:5)
   C. Apostolic authority extended to all churches. (2 Cor. 11:28).
      1. Wrote commandments of Lord to churches (1 Cor. 14:37)
      2. Ordained or appointed things in every church (1 Cor. 7:17)
      3. Writings passed among the churches (Col. 4:16).
IV. Plurality of Elders Delegated Authority in Local Churches.
   A. Plurality in each church (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1; Acts 20:17)
   B. Not just examples, but authority.
      1. Note terms of authority: Overseer, rule, shepherd.
      2. Not legislative, executive, but administrative.
   C. Lead congregation in carrying out authority from above.
      1. Can not decide worship, work or structure of church.
      2. Can decide matters of expediency for the church.
         a. Can see God's wisdom in this.
         b. Local men of wisdom deciding best for that church.

Conclusion:
A. Have noticed where elders fit into God's scheme of things.
B. Some of the things will notice in lessons to come.
   1. Qualifications
   2. Nature of their work.
   3. When to appoint.
   4. How to appoint.