

The plain text is the original talk sheet prepared by Gary Gardner. The blue italics are Wayne Ingalls' responses and the smaller, red, New Times Roman font are Gary's responses to Wayne's responses.

## Leadership in the New Testament (NT)

### 1 Peter 5:1-4

For simplicities sake the numbers given in this study correspond with Strong's concordance numbers and the text I begin with is the Greek to English that is the most common among the people.

#### 1 Peter 5:1-4

**The elders, (#4245) who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder, (#4850), and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd, (#4166), the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, (#1983), not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd, (#750), appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.**

#### NKJV

**I Greek/ English NT.** The English NT, which is generally translated from the Greek into English, has 4 common terms used as descriptions/titles, for leadership in the first century church. (*Kahal* in Hebrew and *ekklesia* in Greek.) The common terms are: Elder, Shepherd/Pastor, Overseer, and Bishop. (In some older translations the term *Presbyter* is used instead of Elder.) In the 1st Peter excerpt above, all the words are used, (except Bishop), to describe the actions/role of one person.

**A.)** In 1 Peter 2:25 the words Shepherd and Overseer are used to describe one person's role, Messiah. 1 Peter 2:25

**25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

#### NKJV

**B.)** In Phil.1:1 the English has Bishop but the Greek word being used is #1885, one of the words that is also translated as Overseer. Phil.1:1 **Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: NKJV** Therefore:

1. Shepherd and Overseer are at times used interchangeably. 1 Pe 2:25
2. Overseer and Bishop are used interchangeably

**C.)** In verse 2 “Shepherd the flock...” uses #4166 which in Eph 4:11 is translated as Pastors. **Phil 4:11...And He Himself gave some to be Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelist, and some Pastors and Teachers,... NKJV.** The English sound alike is the term pasture but in the Greek NT when they are referencing a place for livestock the word is #4830/4829 or the plural, #4999/4829/4830.

1. A Pastor and pasture are similar in English but different terms in the Greek NT.
2. Shepherd/Pastor is used synonymously in the Greek NT for the same person or role.

**D.)** In verse 4 #750 is translated, “Chief Shepherd” and is a good translation of the root words for #750 which are: #746=first, for most, or chief, and 4166 which means shepherd.

**II Andrew Gabriel Roth’s Aramaic English New Testament: 1 And I, an Elder, your associate and a witness of the sufferings of the Messiah, and a participant in his glory which is to be revealed, plead with the Elders who are among you: 2 Feed the flock of Elohim which is committed to you: have care (for it) spiritually: not from compulsion but voluntarily; not for base gain but with all your heart; 3 not as masters of the flock but so as to be a good example for them: 4 that when the Master Shepherd is revealed you may receive a crown of glory that does not fade.**

- A. The Roth translation from the Aramaic text uses the term Elder in verse 1 and Master Shepherd in verse 4 but translate verse 2 quite differently.
  1. Shepherd becomes feed, a very compatible meaning with shepherd, describing the task. The clause about being an overseer has likewise transformed into how someone oversees things, ie. “...have care for...”. Roth does use the term Overseer in other passages, (1 Pe 2:25), so the term is not absent from the Aramaic it is just not used in this chapter.

*The Aramaic re’a (feed) is the verb from which ra’ya (shepherd) comes. You probably recognize the Hebrew cognate ro’eh (shepherd).*

**James Trimm's HRV (from the Aramaic): Now I ask the Elders who are among you-I, an Elder, your friend and a witness of the sufferings of the Messiah, and a partaker of his glory that is about to be revealed. 2 Feed the flock of Eloah that has been committed to you and care [for it] spiritually, not by necessity, but willingly, not for filthy gain, but from your whole heart, 3 not as masters of the flock, but so that you might be good examples for them, 4 that when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will revive from him a crown of glory that will not fade.**

A.) Trimm agrees with Roth in verse 1 and in the use of ; "...care for it...", in verse 2 in place of Overseer. Trimm, like Roth does use the term overseer in 2:25. Trimm's work agrees, in essence, with Roth's.

### **FACTS**

1. Greek and English translations use the terms; Shepherd/Pastor #4166, Elder/Presbyter #4245, Overseer/Bishop #1983-85
2. Aramaic translators use the English terms; Elder, Shepherd, Overseer. (Overseer is used where the Greek to English uses Bishop, 1 Pe 2:25. Elder replaces Bishop in Phil.1:1)
3. In 1 Pe 5:1-4 all the terms or their equivalents, (ie shepherd/pastor etc.), are used to describe one person or one office.
4. Throughout the NT whether Aramaic, Greek, or English the terms used to title or describe a leader in a *kahal* of believers in Messiah are used somewhat interchangeably.

### **III CONCLUSIONS**

- A. There are two biblically articulate offices in the NT. They are: **Teacher**, (Elder/Pastor/Shepherd/Overseer being used interchangeably.) I titled this person a teacher because at various places in the text they are called to be able to teach. **Helper**, or deacon. Deacons don't seem to be decision makers in the early Messianic *Kehalet*, at least not by virtue of their deacon status. Other roles and or definitions are reflections of our culture and/or the English translations we grew up with. (*This is not to take away from the other roles of ministers and ministering listed in Eph. 4 and elsewhere. There are apostles, prophets, evangelist, etc but those are not listed as offices to be held in the NT text or decision makers because they prophecy.*) There is not an "Elder board", then Deacons, followed by a Pastor who works his way "up" to be a Bishop. There seems to be only Elders, and among other things, they all teach. The Apostles are looked at as authorities but notice that the whole reason for Deacons was to allow Apostles to teach

more. For the sake of this discussion Peter is called an Elder so I will make the case that he was instructing the early believers with this letter based on his authority as an Elder. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John also makes use the title of Elder as the basis of authority for John who is most often thought of as the Apostle whom Yeshua loved.

*In Acts 18:8, the believer Crispus is Rab Kenushta in the Aramaic Peshitta, or the Rav of the Synagogue. Sosthenes is the Qashisha of the Synagogue in Acts 18:17. In Phil 1:1, the two offices spoken of there are qashisha and meshamshana. In Hebrew, these would be zagen/zaken and shamash. In the Assyrian and Aramaic speaking churches, the word qashisha has come to mean “priest” but the word for priest in Aramaic is kahne (like kohen). The best English translation for qashisha is probably the English word “elder.” There is a different Aramaic word for shepherd, and a different word for teacher.*

I agree that the first century synagogues had the offices in question. My position is that the early Messianics, upon their withdrawal from the synagogue, were not quick to replace the formal structure. Both of the men mentioned in the passage above were part of the existing set-up in Corinth and we are not led to believe that they immediately set-up another formal structure.

*I found this table online from the UK The Apostolic Episcopal Church (The Holy Eastern Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church) website (<http://aec.johnkersey.org/>). I left everything as it was (including the notes at the bottom), although I think qahal is the Hebrew word for “congregation” and that shamash not kohen would be “assistant” on the chart (deacon/minister/helper), and while the Hebrew word moreh means “teacher,” the NT interprets “rabbi” as “teacher” (John 1:38, John 20:16):*

	<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>Aramaic</i>	<i>Greek</i>	<i>Latin</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<i>congregation</i>	<i>tzibur or minyan</i>	<i>kanasha</i>	<i>ekklesia</i>	<i>congregatio</i>	
<i>elder</i>	<i>zaken</i>	<i>qashisha</i>	<i>presbyteros 1)</i>	<i>senior</i>	<i>The Jewish congregation was in the hands of elders. Cfr Acts 4:8; Acts 14:23; 1 Tim 5:21-22</i>
<i>overseer</i>	<i>paqidh</i>	<i>abouna 2)</i>	<i>episcopus</i>	<i>episcopus</i>	<i>The elders were led by an overseer</i>
<i>synagogue</i>	<i>Beith</i>	<i>kanushta</i>	<i>synagogae</i>	<i>ecclesia</i>	<i>The congregation was</i>

	<i>Haknesset</i>				<i>joining in Beith Haknesset</i>
<b>official</b>	<i>gabi</i>	<i>arkuna</i>	<i>arkon</i>	<i>princeps</i>	<i>The syna-gogue was administrated by an official chosen among the elders. Cfr Mark 5:22</i>
<b>assistant</b>	<i>kohen</i>	<i>shamshana</i>	<i>diakonos</i>	<i>minister</i>	<i>The official was assisted i. a. by assist-ants and teachers. Cfr Mark 10:35</i>
<b>teacher</b>	<i>rabbi or sopher</i>	<i>rabi or malfana</i>	<i>didaskalos</i>	<i>magister</i>	
<b>laying on of hands</b>	<i>s'mikhah</i>	<i>siam eida</i>	<i>epithesis ton kheiron</i>	<i>impositio</i>	<i>Each one was inaugurated by laying on of hands. Cfr Acts 6:6; Acts 13:3; 2 Tim 13:1-6 3)</i>
<b>apostle</b>	<i>shaliach</i>	<i>shelekha 4)</i>	<i>apostolos</i>	<i>apostolus</i>	<i>A person who is sent out [as a professional and/or as a proxy] is an apostle</i>
<b>disciple</b>	<i>talmid</i>	<i>talmida</i>	<i>mathetes</i>	<i>discipulus</i>	

1) *The word priest is derived from presbyteros. Priest in the Jewish tradition (Hebr. kohen) can only be a person belonging to one of the following alternatives. In Tanach (Christian Old Testament) there are three records dealing with the priesthood: “the priests of the Levites” (in Deuteronomy), “the priests of the sons of Aaron” (especially in Leviticus and Numbers), “the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok” (in Ezekiel). Ref. Plaut, op. cit., p 1088.*

2) *In Aramaic-speaking churches the form of address to a clergyman in general is abouna, originally = the respectful one. Jesus was addressed abouna. When we are talking about or are writing to a bishop he is addressed Mar, meaning Lord, and an archbishop Maran Mar, meaning Lord of the Lords. It is in this way we have to understand the addresses in the writings to James and his introducing of himself in The Epistle of James.*

3) *This is nothing but a development of the Jewish ordination. Ref. Sanhedrin 13b/14a in Talmud bavli (Babylonian Talmud). Thereby symbolically transmitting the powers of leadership and used at rabbinic ordination. Cfr 4 Mos 27:18.*

4) *Jesus chose twelve to be with him (Mark 3:14-15). They were later called sheleky. This word is derived from shelakh, which means sent. A person sent on a commission is called shelekha. As a visual sign the principal is laying on of hands. Several of the sheleky created congregations, soon led by a qashisha, that means old man, elder. When the number of qashisha increased one of them was elected abouna. He chose others to assist with different*

*missions: shamshana.*

*(end of copy/paste)*

*While the Scriptures say to appoint or ordain “elders” (qashisha/presbutero/zakanim) in the plural) in every city (Titus 1:5), in every ekklesia/kenushta/qahal (Acts 14:23), the Scriptures also indicate that Elohim appoints several others “in the ekklesia/kenushta/qahal”:*

**1 Corinthians 12:28 (NKJV)** *And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.*

*You mentioned these, but said there were not “offices to be held in the NT text.” Being an “apostle” is what “the Twelve” were, and when the time came, Matthias was chosen to take over the place vacated by Judas.*

*This may be an aside to our discussion but I would label the appointment of Mattias a thing that the 11 did, not something that they were told to do. ie they had not yet “received” the spirit, and it is clear that Paul is the replacement for Judas. My reasoning being that if the 12 foundation stones of the new Jerusalem have the names of the 12 Apostles on them then there are only 12 Apostles. That does leave *some* room for there to be other apostles, but like you I am cautious with the term.*

*The Scripture defines this reason for the appointment as “to take part in this ministry (diakonos/shamash) and apostleship (apostolos/sh’liach)” (Acts 1:25). The problem with separating these apostles/prophets/teachers from the qashisha/presbutero/zakan/elder/episkopos/bishop/overseer/paqid is that they are both appointed “in the ekklesia/kenushta/qahal.” In other words, I think I disagree that apostles, prophets and teachers are not “offices to be held in the NT text.” At the same time, apostles and prophets are certainly not offices that I feel comfortable with, and I am immediately suspicious of those who identify themselves as such.*

*I can agree with the assessment above and still say that the administrative leadership role was still a function of the Elders and that the one unifying characteristic of the Elders is that they teach.*

*In Acts 15, we are given a description of the kenushta in Jerusalem:*

**Acts 15:4 (NASB)** *When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.*

Perhaps one reasonable harmonization of these is found in the following, a portion of a Messianic ministry's statement of faith:

We believe the "kahal" or "ekklesia" (assembly of the called out ones) has the authority to ordain individuals that have a specific calling to minister to the Body of believers as Rosh Zaken (Head Elder), Messianic Yisrael Minister, known in Hebrew as Rabbi (male) or Rebbetzin (female) over local Redeemed Yisrael (Israel) assemblies under the authority and placement of Yahushua HaMashiach (Messiah), the Head of the Body (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 4:11-16); through the supervision and ministry of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) (II Cor. 3:6; Col. 1:18; I Tim. 5:17). The Rosh Zaken (Head Elder) or Messianic Yisrael Minister typically serves one or more offices of the five-fold ministry as Roeh (Pastor); M'vasayr (Evangelist); Moreh (Teacher); Navi (Prophet); Shaliach (Apostle) (Eph. 4:11-16). The title of Rabbi/Rebbetzin is viewed as signatory of responsibility and ability to teach Torah.

The bottom line of what I am thinking is this: The role of zaken/elder probably could include the role of roeh/shamash/feeder/deacon at the same time as moreh/rabbi/teacher. One could be a zaken who serves as sh'liach or as an evangelist. Right now, we may be more focused on making sure there are not "zakenim without portfolio," but I think that an argument can be made from Scripture that there are more portfolios than "teacher."

I can agree to this also. My issue is that the tendency is going to be to have these "wise ones" make the judgments of right and wrong for the kehal and then just present the findings. That would be in opposition to the express words of Messiah in Mt 18. I believe that the move to a structure mirroring the first century Jewish model will lead to abuse because for 2000 years it has led to abuse. Because I do not see a biblical requirement for it I see great benefits in avoiding it. I do, however, grant you that it is clearly the model used in the Jewish world at the time, and when the Messianics got organized there are great reasons to believe that they went with what they knew.

- B. **Mt. 18** In Mt 18 the offended and the offending parties go before the *kehal* to get a judgment, they do not go before a *Beit Din*, (house of justice ie a group of the believers leaders), or Elder board. This type of management makes for, public, messy, and inefficient management of the believers business, but it is what Messiah has instructed us to do. In our current society it might even invite litigation, (leaving your house each day for work does that!), but it is still the model given. A bigger issue is the context of Mt 18. The entire tone of the chapter has to do with reconciliation and not judgment, yet it is always referenced as the judgment passage. There is probably more to the text that we want to see because of our focus on dealing with using it to deal with, "wrong

thinking". (The wrong doer in Mt 18 is to be treated like a tax collector...how did the early believers treat Matthew the tax collector?) The local *Beit Din* was a very common thing in the first century so it should get our attention that Messiah did not use that terminology in His discussion on how to deal with an offending brother. Yeshua elected not to mention a *Beit Din* so perhaps we should also not mention a *Beit Din* in our *Kehalot*.

- C. **Acts 15** In Acts 15 the local Elders sought the advice of the distant *Kehal* leaders in Jerusalem. There is no doubt that Jerusalem Elders and Apostles were thought of as having wisdom and authority. People today often look at this as a Messianic/Christian/Natzarene *Beit Din*, and that could very well be true. However the nature of that group has little bearing on what to do at the local level. Mt. 18 avoids the mention and the level of intervention that a *Beit Din* would have, problems went directly from the persons involved and their witnesses to the *Kehal*. We do not have a modern group that has the kind of respect of the Apostles and Elders in Jerusalem, nor do we have a clear "chain of evidence" on who might have received the mantle from that group. If the time comes that there is a need, then we can trust that the Father will have given us trustworthy people that we can go to.
- D. **How now shall we live? 1.)** Using the method indorsed by Messiah in MT 18 would seem to lead to slow growth, confusion and litigation in our day but...in the first century it led to resurrection, revival, and an era of growth never seen before or since. **2.)** Having a leadership group made up of those that actually do the teaching of the word, paid or otherwise, is counter culture but pro-scriptures. **3.)** I see the use of loaded biblical terms as unnecessary and difficult to manage. Since the labels from the Bible come with definitions from outside the bible, we will constantly be explaining what we really mean and it is my belief that we will fail. I believe that before long we will have an Elder board that sets in judgment and planning, but little else. If that was the Biblical way then we would have to do it, but since it is not what was commanded in the NT, I believe we should avoid doing it now by using biblical titles very strictly in a biblical way or not at all. After all, the English term Elder is not the Hebrew term and Stern, along with others, translates the word differently.
- E. **Finally:** To conclude I think that Stern in the Complete Jewish Bible may have gotten the passage in 1 Pe 5:1-4 the most correct...minus the use of Yiddish in *macher*. **Therefore I urge the congregation leaders among you, as a fellow-leader and witness to Messiah's sufferings, as well as a sharer in the glory to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is in your care, exercising oversight not out of constraint, but with enthusiasm; 3 also not as machers dominating over those in**

**your care, but as people who become examples to the flock. 4 Then when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive glory as your unfading crown.**

Gary Gardner.

*The Messiah did not tell the believers to hold meetings issue proclamations about doctrine as they did in Acts 15. Sequentially, Acts 14:23 precedes the Jerusalem meeting.*

Yes they did...and that has not always worked out so well. The Acts 15 example is a great case in point in that it has been used for centuries to denigrate the Torah. Don't misunderstand me I believe the Acts 15 ruling is right and that they had authority from the other believers to rule. My issue is that it should not have been necessary since Paul was there and he was right. Because the ruling was necessitated it has been used incorrectly for 1500 years. Had believers sought the spirit they would have been capable of hearing for themselves.

Big point. The text in Acts 15, b (that I agree with), is history not theology or instructions. Many of the abuses you and I hate in the traditional church are because doctrines are taken from observations of biblical history rather than from actual instructions. An obvious example of this is when sects/cults tell everyone to sell what they have and give it to the "apostle/prophet" because that was done in Acts. It was done, but not commanded, and that is the case I am making about the leadership positions.

**Acts 14:23 (NASB)** *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.*

*Acts 15, though, doesn't say that the elders sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, but that they were sent by the ekklesia/edta/adat. I suggest that they were sent by the ekklesia of Antioch, but only because Paul, Barnabas, and the zakenim of Antioch could not answer/refute the claims made concerning salvation and circumcision. They sought a ruling by an acknowledged higher authority. Today, no universally acknowledged higher authority exists, as you have pointed out. This does not mean it is unscriptural to have one – the Nazarenes formed one and did not seek a ruling from the Pharisees' Sanhedrin. We often call the Acts 15 meeting the Jerusalem Council. However, that is English. When the word "council" in a*

*Jewish context appears in the KJV it is the word “sunedrion,” ( I am having trouble finding the word sunedrion, what verse is this in?) Sanhedrin. The Nazarene Beit Din, (Beit Din is not a biblical office, term, or organization.), of Acts 15, in my view, would be better called the Nazarene Sanhedrin.....*

*Whine alert: Presbyterians have “The Session” and Baptists have whatever Baptists have, but Nazarenes/Messianics can’t figure out what a group of zaqenim should be called.....*

My main points in this discussion are: 1.) Let’s not rush to do what we are allowed but not required to do. Elders were respected and sought out for guidance, but they taught. This we know for sure, lets do what we know until we have need for more. a.) The reason from the scriptures that I see for this is maturity. It wasn’t until the kehal in Jerusalem was large that they got around to deacons. They knew what they were from the beginning but did not institute them until they needed them. This allows for discipling happening so that when there is a need there are trusted people who know the LORD and will be believed when they speak. This movement has been littered with people who have run before they knew enough and you can probably list the negative results as well or better than I can. I don’t blame people, I too have some poor leadership decisions that I made because I was not as wise in the word as I thought I was, but there is not a track record of previous believers to help teach us.

2.) That is my second point, lets grow up some and not try to create/recreate a structure that was used to deal with tens of thousands of people when there are only tens. The Jerusalem church waited and operated on only the 12 teacher/Elder/Apostles for a significant time.

3.) Just a reminder, even if I agree on a more formal structure than I think wise, any role of a Beit Din, (BD), will be much smaller than what is commonly practiced historically and today, because of Messiah’s command to let the kehal decide, not the BD. With that in mind what exactly would a BD do on the local level?

4.) Lastly the Group in Acts 15 was sought out to answer a regional issue. Since it is a historical passage and not instructional we don’t know for sure but I am assuming that they were following Mt18 for local issues. If they weren’t following Messiah in that area do we want to imitate that?

I sense even before I send this that you are going to go crazy over my comment on historical observations in the bible vs theological/instructional passages but hey...this is fun.

Your friend GG

*Added 1/15/2010: Holding that Acts 15 is “historical...and not instructional” is heading down the very same slippery slope that dispensationalists slide down on their way to concluding that everything before Acts 2 or Acts 12 or Acts 13 or Acts 28 was for the Jews and not for “the Church.” This idea is not only wrong because of where it leads, but it is also wrong because Paul used history as instruction, as he wrote concerning the Exodus from Egypt:*

**1 Corinthians 10:6** (NASB) *Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.*

*Despite Paul’s clear words “examples for us,” dispensationalists argue that the Exodus, the Gospels, all that Jewish stuff, is not “for us.”*

*1/25/10 The reason I reference it as historical is because it is. The slippery slope is to see this passage as Doctrine but not passages you don’t like, Acts 2:44 and the sharing of all the believer’s resources. No one is advocating communism so on what basis do you embrace one passage from Acts but reject the other? I would bet that you and I do so by the same criteria, what does Torah and TaNaK say. It is my belief that Torah passages commanding judges to be set up in each tribe and city serve the same role as the ancient Beit Din, but that we do not know that they were organized in the same way and just how authoritative they actually were. From our discussions I gather that you feel they were used and organized in Moshe’s day much as they were in the Common Era. I just don’t see that organization in the scriptures or commanded by the scriptures. Also the judges were set up to deal with a large population, until we have a large population we should not get involved in setting up that structure.*

*Added 1/15/2010: The Beit Din is not a phrase that appears in the Bible, but the description of what a Beit Din does is absolutely Biblical.*

**Devarim 16:18 (ISR)** *“Appoint judges (shof’tim) and officers (shot’rim) within all your gates, which יהוה your Elohim is giving you, according to your tribes. And they shall judge the people with righteous right-ruling.”*

*The **functions** of a Beit Din are confirmed by Paul when he writes against the practice of believers in Corinth:*

*Functions, yes but the structure is not confirmed in the text of the NT or OT. This absence gives us the flex ability to make a system that is flexible*

enough to deal with all situations. What the scriptures demand is that those hearing cases be wise mature believers, respected by all. Whether there are three or more, and some of the other modern Beit Din distinctives are where the scriptures are silent, almost. Moshe and the book of Judges all judged alone. In Mt. 18 two or three go and confront the sinner before taking it to the kahal/ekklesia aka church. I want to stress that the real issue is that they were dealing with larger numbers of people than we are and they had a better pool of “talent” to draw from for witnesses, and a greater need for organized responses.

*1 Cor 6: 1-6 (HRV) 1 Does a man from you, dare, when he has a complaint with his brother, to go to trial before the unrighteous, and not before the Set-Apart-Ones? 2 Or do you not know that the Set-Apart-Ones will judge the world? And if the world is being judged by you, are you not worthy to judge small judgments? 3 Do you not know that you will judge angels; how much more, these [things] that are of this world? 4 And, if you have a complaint concerning a worldly matter, you cause those who are despicable in the assembly to sit in judgment for you. 5 Now I say [this] for a reproach to you. So, do you not have even one wise man, that is able to cause agreement between a brother and his brother? 6 But a brother is judged with his brother, and moreover, before those who do not believe.*

*My comment: The summary of the six verses above is that believers from Corinth preferred to be judged in a secular court by secular judges (“trial before the unrighteous”) instead of taking the issue “before the Set Apart Ones.” Paul disagrees with and condemns this practice. In a community of believers, Paul argues that disputes within this community ought to be decided by judges within this community. The wise men, i.e. the judges on this religious court within this community are to “cause agreement between a brother and his brother,” as Paul writes. Paul asks pointedly: “So, do you not have even one wise man, that is able to cause agreement between a brother and his brother?” The historical witness of the Mishnah says that in most cases it takes three judges (wise men) to decide an issue (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 1:1 – 2). However, this information from the Mishnah only confirms what we already know from the book of Matthew, chapter 18, which is now easily connected to Paul’s argument in favor of religious courts above. The famous “Matthew 18 process” is designed to bring about agreement within the community (Matthew 18: 15 -16) The difference between Paul’s emphasis and that found in Yeshua’s example is that “the Matthew 18 process” is designed to help one who is sinning agree that his behavior is sinful. The Torah based injunction (from Devarim 19:15) is to take the case before two or three witnesses in order for the judges to “investigate thoroughly” (Devarim 19:18). In Matthew 18, only the witnesses are*

mentioned, and the judges are not. However, one of the methods of Hebraic argumentation is a kind of shorthand. If one quotes a snippet from a passage, the speaker assumes that the hearer already knows the context of the passage from which the quotation is made (e.g. Ya'akov haTzaddiq quoting from Amos 9 about the fallen sukkah of David). Thus, when Yeshua quotes Devarim 19, he assumes his hearers know the context of the passage.

*I have read that modern Orthodox halakhah allows even one learned individual to establish a beit din in extraordinary situations (e.g. establishing a new Orthodox community), although I have not been able to find the source for this halakhah. In the middle ages, Rabbi Yosef Karo compiled "Shulcan Aruch," the codification of accepted halakhah within what is known as Orthodox Judaism. I only mention this because Rabbi Karo had the same lament as Paul: Why are you taking your disputes outside the community -- outside the religious courts -- and into the civil courts?*

*Anyway, based on the context of Matthew 18, upon Paul's statement in his letter to the believers in Corinth, and upon the witness of how the ancient Nazarenes walked out the Torah in Acts 15, I conclude that the functions of the Beit Din are absolutely Biblical. However, this does not mean that the Beit Din is the design for congregational leadership because the specific purpose of the Beit Din is to resolve disputes and to cause agreement (as the Nazarene Beit Din in Acts 15 surely did).*

The areas I highlighted show some of the difficulties I have with the extra-biblical designators that come with the loaded term; Beit Din. You do make the point that in some halachic views there can be 1 judge but the standard for a local Beit Din is 3. This flies in the face of the Torah commands and the Mt 18 passage as well. The idea that orthodox halacha allows it is difficult not only because of its non-believing source, (kind of like Paul criticizing the Corinthians for going to non-believers, we are doing the same?) but because it has opinions for and against different ideas making it possible to come up with conflicting statements.

*[Added 1/19/2010]*

*For consideration in regards to the meaning of ekklesia in Matthew 18:17 (i.e. why it could be understood to refer to "the judges that shall be in those days" from Devarim 17:9):*

*References in which ekklesia does not mean “the assembly of all the believers,” or just an assembly of people, but rather some sort of legislative body:*

**Acts 19:39** *"But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly."*

*(yes, it does have qualifier, ennomo).*

*Both of the following passages use the Greek work ekklesian, feminine accusative singular, the same form that appears in canonical Matthew 16:18 and Romans 16:5, among other places.*

*From Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 19:7.4 However, there was a certain man of the Jewish nation at Jerusalem, who appeared to be very accurate in the knowledge of the law. His name was Simon. This man got together an **assembly**, while the king was absent at Caesarea, and had the insolence to accuse him of being unclean, and that he might justly be excluded out of the temple, since it belonged only to native Jews.*

*Josephus, Life of Flavius Josephus 268 When I had suggested these instructions to them [the one hundred principal men from Life 266], and while they were getting themselves ready as fast as they could, I sent them on this errand the third day after they had been **assembled**: I also sent five hundred armed men with them [as a guard].*

*But to use a minority translation of the word to meet the needs of your argument is a poor practice to begin. It is somewhat akin to the translation of *synagogue* in James 2 as church when it is translated as synagogue every other time in the Greek NT. (Another reason for use to learn to read Hebrew and Aramaic so we can study without the need for translations!)*

(Wayne)

*In closing,*

*You the reader can see that we are sharply divided on the role of leadership in the NT. Both of us base our understandings on the scriptures and what we think they mean. We both agree that believers in Yeshua need to deal with issues themselves, not relying on unbelievers. We believe that the actual implementation of a system of “judging” is for a time when we have numbers that would preclude the Kahal being able to deal with issues on an *ad hoc* basis.*

(Sorry for the Latin!) The essence of my argument is that where the scriptures are silent it is to allow individual communities to come up with unique solutions to their problems rather than a one size fits all. The area of leadership is one where I believe there is more taught than there is written, so we have flexibility.

I hope you have enjoyed reading our discussions and seeing how people can disagree and still be civil and continue to study together. In fact our greatest disagreements came over the area of the “Mythical” *Beit Din* which Wayne pointed out is not really a local leadership issue.

Shalom to all, Gary Gardner.