

IS DEACON AN HONORARY ROLE?

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The word Deacon is only mentioned twice in the New Testament. These are Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, but is a role discussed in a couple of other verses.

Philippians 1: “1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and **deacons**” which is supposed to have been written about AD 61.

1 Timothy 3: “8 **Deacons** likewise must be men of dignity, not double-tongued, or addicted to much wine or fond of sordid gain, 9 but holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 These men must also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach. 11 Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 **Deacons** must be husbands of only one wife, and good managers of their children and their own households. 13 For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus” which is supposed to have been written about AD 63-65. This section includes counsel for women in the middle, but it can be remembered that they did not have computer word processing at the time.

Continued on page 3

BE A GOOD CITIZEN

“Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God.” (Rom. 13:1 NLT)

Governing authorities were provided by God to establish order instead of chaos. We are better able to work, teach and live in a country with established laws that protect us. *“So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted,” (Rom. 13:2 NLT)*

A good citizen abides by this rule. *“Love does no harm to its neighbor.” (Rom. 13:10 NIV)*



Stand with integrity for the truth. Love is from God and speaks truth. Hatred is from Satan and seeks to destroy, it does not tell the truth.

“The power of one man or one woman doing the right thing for the right reason, and at the right time, is the greatest influence in our society.” Jack Kemp

Elizabeth Brown

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IS DEACON AN HONORARY ROLE?, p. 2

One thing you can conclude other than that there are very similar requirements for Deacons as Shepherds is that the role existed before the qualifications were stated in writing. This is if the estimated dates for the writings are accurate.

Neither of these passages indicate what a Deacon is to do, other than to be a good Christian.

However, it is commonly understood that the example in Acts 6:1-7 of men being selected to take care of the Grecian widows were in fact prototype Deacons.

Acts 6:1-7 NASB “1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 “Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”

Following that line of reasoning, what is said is:

1. A task was identified to be done.
2. The Apostles identified it was not appropriate for them to be burdened with the task.
3. The Apostles determined the qualifications of the men who they could put in charge of the task.

4. Members selected men with these qualifications to do the task.

5. The Apostles prayed for them and laid their hands on them and delegated it to them.

6. The Apostles let them do it.

What is implied by this is:

1. The men were qualified to do the task.
2. The Apostles turned the task over to them.
3. The prototype deacons understood what the task was to be done.
4. The Apostles returned to devoting themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.
5. The Apostles did not continue in participation in that task as they were devoting themselves to something else.

How does this relate to us today without current Apostles? In the sixth Chapter shortly after Pentecost, there were no Shepherds appointed yet. It is reasonable to say that the Apostles were acting as the Shepherds at that time. This would simply relate to the Shepherds today acting in the role that the Apostles were doing in Acts. Acts 6:3.

It is then reasonable to say that the 7 men selected to attend to the Grecian widows were acting as early Deacons, even though the roles of Shepherd and Deacon had not been defined yet. The word deacon is derived from the Greek word *diákonos* (διάκονος), which is a standard ancient Greek word meaning "servant", "waiting-man", "minister", or "messenger".

The conclusion this would lead you to is that the prototype Deacons were appointed to do a role as a servant, not simply to be honored. Whereas a brother might be considered honored to be considered worthy to be appointed as a Deacon, it is clearly a servant role rather than an honorary role.

If you are going to follow the New Testament pattern, your Deacons need to be assigned to a role(s) and expected to do it.

BREAKING NEWS!

Gospel Truth

JESUS LIVES!

He Lives! He Lives!

He longs to live in me!

He longs to live in you!

What wonders He has done!

What wonders He can do!

Though we lay battered and worn,
Our eyes and hearts suffering from the storm,
He declares His power to the forlorn.
Behold! By faith in Him we are reborn!
By grace we take our place.

Our eyes, closed in fear of the night
We open to gleam of heavenly light
The chains that bound us fall away
And we are freed to follow the way
Of the Lord.

The shame of bound and idle hands
Now eagerly reach out to become helping hands
Reaching up to glorify our Father and the Son.
The full measure of enduring love fills every empty heart
Souls reborn rejoice with the Spirit of fresh start.
Each one equipped to do their part
To make welcome the Son of man
Lord of the land.

He Lives! He Lives!

As He lived in the beginning, He lives now and always shall.

Praise Him all in heaven and here below

Beautify the image of His creation

May His beauty be seen in every nation.

For He is the glory of God

The perfect and pleasing sacrifice

Revealed to man

By

The grace of God

Alleluia, AMEN

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

SO LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT

So let me get this straight: we're a nation that accepts pornography but hates abuse. A nation that doesn't believe in gender but fights for women's rights. We're a nation that believes no child should be left behind but we have aborted over 60 million. We're a nation where heroes have died so our flag could fly over a free nation, but then we give the title "heroes" to wealthy athletes who kneel in disrespect. We're a nation where political parties ignore the corruption of their own party while condemning the corruption of the other. We're a nation of laws, yet we're a nation where that only applies if you're not politically powerful. We're a nation that has in God we trust printed on our money but we're a nation where the ACLU sues people who make His name known in public. We're the "greatest" nation on the earth yet we consume more antidepressants than any other nation in the world. We're a nation that pledges we're "one" yet we're a nation of aggressive division. And we wonder why there is so much confusion?

Received the above in a text, with the source unknown. Should be a wake-up call.

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #112 - GOLDEN DART FROG

The Golden Dart Frog is considered one of the most toxic animals on Earth. The indigenous Emberá people of Colombia have used its powerful venom for centuries to tip their blow-gun darts when hunting, hence the species' name.

The average dose carried by a frog will vary between locations, and consequent local diet, but the average wild *frog* is generally estimated to contain about one milligram of poison, enough to kill about 10,000 mice, 10 to 20 humans, or to up to two African bull elephants.

Scientists are unsure of the source of this frog's amazing toxicity, but it is possible they assimilate poisons, which are carried by their prey. The high toxicity appears to be due to the consumption of small insects or other arthropods, and one of these may truly be the most poisonous creature on Earth.

Poison dart frogs raised in captivity and isolated from insects in their native habitat never develop venom.

These frogs can be pale yellow to deep, golden yellow, "mint green", metallic green, pale green, white, golden yellow, orange, metallic orange, and yellow-orange in color, with varying intensity.

The golden poison frog's skin is densely coated in an alkaloid toxin, one of a number of poisons common to dart frogs. This poison prevents its victim's nerves from transmitting impulses, leaving the muscles in an inactive state of contraction, which can lead to heart failure or fibrillation. The toxins can be stored by frogs for years after the frog is deprived of a

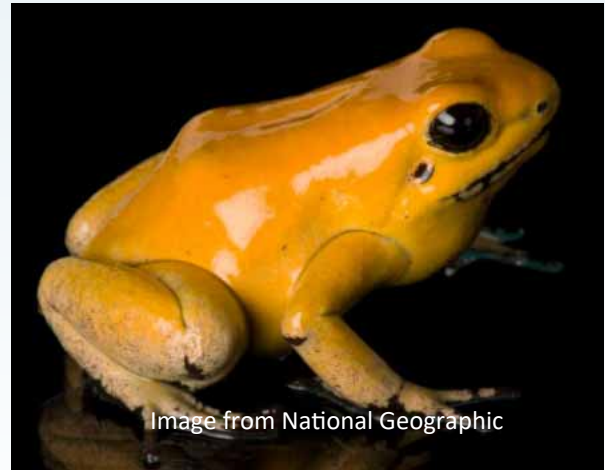


Image from National Geographic



Image from Wikipedia

food-based source, and such toxins do not readily deteriorate, even when transferred to another surface.

The golden poison frog is not venomous, but poisonous: venomous animals have a delivery method for the toxin, such as fangs or spines, while poisonous animals and plants do not have a delivery method and rely on transference of the toxin, typically by, but not limited to, ingestion. Most poison

dart frogs use poison only as a self-defense mechanism and not for killing prey.

What the preceding says is that this frog eats extremely poisonous insects without being harmed, learned how to store the poison in their skin without harm to themselves, but it will kill you if you ingest it or get hit with a blowgun dart with it on it.

That would be hard to do as the first time a frog ate the poisonous insect it would have died rather than waiting around for evolutionary accidents to happen. Doesn't that sound like the design of an intelligent designer.

Benton F. Baugh

Information from National Geographic and Wikipedia.

CHURCH GROWTH: WHY DON'T WE GRADUATE SOME CHRISTIANS?

A deacon recently received the following memo:

From: Joe, current chairman of the elders

RE: Work/Meetings during Bible Class Time

It has come to our attention that from time-to-time on Wednesday evenings a few business meetings and/or work sessions are being held during the time set aside for Bible Study.

The elders believe that this time should be used, however, for Bible study and, hence, prefer that any such meetings should be scheduled either before or after classes. We recognize that there may be reasons why this is the only time available to you, but it would be appreciated if you could do your best to arrange your work or meeting schedules around Bible class time – not during the period from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings.

Joe is friendly, well respected by all, and is an outstanding example of an elder. His intention is only good, and is reasonably conventional. This lesson is only an exercise in looking at the other side of a situation.

What Joe is basically saying is that even on Wednesday nights the members of the congregation which typically have an average tenure in the church of 40-50 years need to spend Wednesday evening in an instructional class which is typically formatted to be “light” enough for new and/or prospective members. What that means is:

1. The education program is not educational - if we are still doing the same things 50 years later, we are not growing or learning. You certainly don't need that long to get a college degree.

2. There must be no goal for the education program but to self-perpetuate itself.

Shouldn't we be insisting that mature Christians stop sitting in repetitive classes and get to work? Wouldn't Wednesday evenings be a great time to get together and have planning meetings and have work sessions? Instead of Wednesday Night Service, it can become **Wednesday Service Night**.

There are some members who would like to sit in classes forever, and if they do perhaps we should let them (perhaps). But to insist that everyone sit in “light” classes for the next 50 years (which in reality is what Joe is saying) does not seem reasonable.

The repetitive nature of Wednesday night services is currently resulting in lower and lower percentage attendance at many congregations. Wouldn't it be better to use the time to involve and engage members in the work of the church rather than simply be an audience the third or fourth time during a week.

It might even be reasonable to **encourage** meetings on Wednesday night. Just imagine that if a member not currently attending on Wednesday night comes to the meeting, he or she may bring the rest of the family.

If you engage the members in good works on Wednesday night rather than simply being an audience, it gives something for them to invite their friends to attend. Facilitating that invitation is **an evangelistic act**.

Wouldn't it be reasonable to graduate more of your members from being a permanent audience to being active working members of your congregation. It takes planning to engage members in the work of the church. Even that task of planning can be delegated to graduated Christians.

What have you got to lose?

SUMMARY: FOREKNOWLEDGE means the knowledge God has of events before they happen. It carries with it the implication that God has knowledge of some or all future events before they happen. It causes problems with the concept of free moral agency. An alternate to foreknowledge as we would define it is God's ability to make prophecies because He can control events and make the prophecy come true.

FOREKNOWLEDGE means the knowledge God has of events before they happen. It carries with it the implication that God has knowledge of some or all future events before they happen.

CONSENSUS OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST: God has the complete ability for foreknowledge in the sense in which we use the word today but only actually knows what is going to happen when he elects to know. As He can know what you are going to do, but does not actually know because He has chosen not to know, your eternal salvation is not predestined.

ALTERNATE SUGGESTED CONCLUSION: God does not have foreknowledge in the sense in which we normally use the word. He can prophecy and "foreknow" what is going to happen because He can control the events and make sure that it happens.

.....

THREE ALTERNATIVE BELIEFS ON FOREKNOWLEDGE ARE POSSIBLE: There are three categories of beliefs on the subject of God's foreknowledge which are possible: (1) full foreknowledge, (2) partial or limited foreknowledge, and (3) no foreknowledge. Any understanding of this subject will fall into one of these three categories. It is critical that your understanding of this subject take all related verses into consideration.

VERSES INDICATING AT LEAST SOME FOREKNOWLEDGE

1. Isaiah 42:9: "Now I declare new things; Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you."
2. Isaiah 46:10: "Declaring the end from the beginning"
3. Daniel 2:1-45: The king's dream about the gold, silver, bronze, iron, & clay statue foretelling substantial information about future kingdoms on the earth and when Christ's kingdom would be established.
4. Psalms 139:15-16: "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

5. Matthew 24:15-35: Although the prophecies of Matthew 24 were to be fulfilled within a few years, they still indicate foreknowledge of the events.
6. Matthew 25:34: "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
7. Acts 2:23: "this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."
8. Romans 8:29-30 "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."
9. 1 Peter 1:1-2 "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure."
10. 1 Peter 1:20: "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world,"
11. Revelation 20:1-15: The future prophecies of Revelation as typified by the prophecies in chapter 20 certainly tend to indicate foreknowledge.
11. More than 100 prophecies about Christ are given in the Old Testament.

It is easy to conclude God has foreknowledge from reviewing verses such as these.

VERSES INDICATING A LIMIT TO THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

We have found no verses which state directly that the foreknowledge of God is limited. It is only inferred from the teachings of some verses such as:

1. Genesis 6:6-7: Why would God be sorry that He had made man, if He had full knowledge from the start of how man was going to turn out?
2. Genesis 18:20-21: "And the Lord said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorra is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know it."
3. Genesis 22:12: "for now I know that you fear God" (said of Abraham at the offering of Isaac).
4. Exodus 32:8-10: When the children of Israel made the golden calf, God became angry. If He knew that they were going to do it, why would He have gotten mad? Vs. 14 says He changed his mind, indicating that He had not been aware of what He Himself was going to think.

5. Numbers 14:12: "I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation..." (God is angry with the Israelites because they were alarmed due to the spies' reports)
Numbers 14:13-19: Moses appeals to God to change His mind.
Numbers 14:20: "So the Lord said I have pardoned them according to your word;" (God changed His mind and did not smite the Israelites. If God did not change His mind from verse 12 to 20 but knew all the time that He was not going to smite the Israelites, then He lied in verse 12. God does not lie.)
6. Jeremiah 19:5: "a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind"
7. Jeremiah 32:35: "which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination"
8. Jonah 3:1-10: God said that Nineveh would be overthrown in 40. When He saw their repentance He relented and did not do it. If He knew that He was not going to overthrow Nineveh, He lied to them or was at least hypocritical. We know that God does not lie and is not hypocritical, so the only conclusion can be that God did not have future knowledge of what was going to happen in Nineveh. It has been suggested that the statement that Nineveh would be destroyed was a conditional statement. The Bible does not state it as a conditional statement, and a further indication that this was not the case is that when God relented in 3:10, Jonah became angry (4:1). If he had been issuing a conditional proclamation, he would have understood that it might have been followed.
9. I Samuel 15:35: "And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel."
10. 2 Kings 20:1-6: King Hezekiah was notified by God thru the prophet Isaiah to get his house in order for he was about to die. Hezekiah prayed to God and wept bitterly. God heard the prayers of Hezekiah and sent Isaiah back to say that he would add 15 years to Hezekiah's life. If God had foreknowledge that he was going to extend Isaiah's life by 15 years, he would have made an untrue statement to first say he was about to die.

VERSES STATING THAT GOD HAS NO FOREKNOWLEDGE

We have found no verses which teach that God has no foreknowledge.

VERSES STATING THAT GOD HAS UNLIMITED FOREKNOWLEDGE

We have found no verses which indicate the unlimited foreknowledge of God.

VERSES TAKEN TO INDICATE UNLIMITED FOREKNOWLEDGE

Although no verses state the unlimited foreknowledge of God, the following concepts are taken by some as an indication of unlimited foreknowledge:

1. **OMNISCIENCE OF GOD** (all knowing): If God has learned one thing, then He was and is not omniscient. Omniscience is not a scriptural term. (Omniscience could be limited to present knowledge rather than future knowledge and still be an omniscience characteristic.)
2. **IMMUTABILITY OF GOD**: A term which is used to indicate the concept that God is unchangeable. It is frequently taken to mean that if God learns something, then He would change in learning. Therefore, God must know everything or He would be changeable. Immutability of God is only used in Heb. 6:17-18 with respect to having an unchangeable purpose and inability to lie. The Bible does not say that He cannot change in some ways.

God declares himself to be unchangeable in Malachi 3:6: "For I, the Lord, do not change, therefore....". Does the characteristic of being "unchangeable" extend to not receiving or learning more knowledge? Is God's learning something a change in God, or does the unchangeableness of God describe the nature of God?

To disprove that the understanding that the immutability and/ or unchangeableness of God means that God has all future knowledge, all you would have to do is to find a scripture where God said He would do something, and then He changed His mind and didn't do it. If it ever happened, then God did not have future knowledge of that event, or He was lying. We know that God does not lie, so it would have to mean that we misunderstand immutability and/or unchangeableness. Immutability and/or unchangeableness would not then necessarily imply that God had all future knowledge. Examples of this occur in Numbers 14:12-20 and Jonah 3:1-10 as discussed in a previous section. Exodus 32:14, Amos 7:3 & 6 state "The Lord changed His mind.". Clearly unchangeability is not all encompassing.

3. **INFINITY OF GOD**: Psalm 147:5 "His understanding is infinite." The assumption would be that anything infinite is all inclusive. This is not true. Consider a line infinitely long. The line is infinitely long, but has no width or height. Infinite understanding does not preclude foreknowledge, but it does not prove it either. It is a different characteristic.
4. **PERFECTION OF GOD**: Job 36:4 "One who is perfect in knowledge is with you." Perfection does not prove unlimited foreknowledge. Job 3:16 "The wonders of the One perfect in knowledge." Again, perfection does not necessarily imply unlimited foreknowledge.

HOW A BELIEVER IN UNLIMITED FOREKNOWLEDGE WILL EXPLAIN THE VERSES INDICATING LIMITED FOREKNOWLEDGE

Each of the verses in the section titled VERSES INDICATING A LIMIT TO GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE must be explained in accordance with the understanding of unlimited foreknowledge, if you choose to believe in unlimited foreknowledge. Some of the ways to explain that these verses do not mean what they say are:

1. The language is accommodative of the limited understanding of man, similar to saying that God has eyes and ears. It puts it in terms which we can understand.
2. It is not clear what God was trying to say to the person in the scripture.
3. God's "repenting" in Genesis 6:6 simply means a change in attitude. (Why would His attitude change if He knew what was going to happen? Was He unduly optimistic when they were doing good and became more pessimistic when they started doing bad, as if He didn't know they were going to start doing bad?)

(1) Pictorial Bible Dictionary, The Southwest Company, 1966, p. 692.

Visitors

As you travel, you can be of assistance in local congregations in helping them to understand how they are seen by potential visitors and prospects.

On the occginstitute.org website, Project Papers tab is a paper titled:
MYSTERY GUEST PROGRAM

This paper and the forms included will help you anonymously communicate with the congregation and improve their "curb appeal".

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All past copies of this newsletter can be found on the website "occg.institute" under the E-MAGAZINE tab.

Hello, this is Maxine -- I have questions!



Do you ever wonder why you gave me your e-mail address in the first place?

And... A FAVORITE:

The statistics on sanity say that one out of every four persons is suffering from some sort of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're OK, then it's you!

~
REMEMBER, a day without a smile is like a day without sunshine!

And a day without sunshine is, like.....night!!!!



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Fifty years ago we could take it for granted that most people we met believed in God, were of the Christian religion, and that society in general supported church work. Today atheistic evolution is openly taught in schools and we are getting progressively less support for religious practices. After you have established a relationship with a prospect, this series will provide concise Christian apologetics.

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A comparison of the various offerings to be the god, leading to the conclusion that Jehovah and Jesus are God.

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A brief history of the world and of Christianity leading to a discussion of how to find Christ's church.

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