

elders in the city. Now, I don't say that this verse proves that there were a lot of ~~■~~ elders in each city. I ~~phrase~~ phrase my statemetr negative. I said there is no N.T. evidence where there is evidence of there being one elder placed in a church or in a city. There is no evidence of that anywhere, in the N.T. That is not to say that it may not have been. But all our evidence is the other way. Our evidence all looks in the direction of having a number of elders in every church. It looks in that direction. I don't say that it proves it. It certainly was not the practice which continued a few centuries later. It definitely was not. But as far as the N.T. is concerned, there is no evidence anywhere of any official in a church who is called the man with this title of this church. There is no such evidence. They ordained ~~■~~ elders to ~~■~~ elders in the churches. In Ephesus he called for the ~~■~~ come down and he called them bishops. He writes to Philippi to the bishops and the deacons. Now, it is possible that by the time that he wrote to Philippi they had eight congregations in the town, it is ~~possible~~ but ~~■~~ there is not the ~~■~~ slightest evidence anywhere that there was more than one congregation in Philippi, at this time. Not the slightest ~~■~~ evidence. ~~■~~

■ And I don't say that this proves that there were a lot of ~~■~~ elders in one church in Philippians, I say that there is not the ~~■~~ slightest evidence to suggest that there was any church in Philippi or anywhere else at that time that had ~~■~~ more than one bishop or more than one elder in it. All the N.T. evidence would show that at that time there was a group of elders, or a group of bishops, whichever you want to call it, it looks in that direction. It does not prove the contrary, but there is not the slightest evidence in the other direction.

Now, the other officials we have looked at. ¹ These are the main ones. The term deacon, as we noticed, is only used three times in the N.T. And that is an interesting thing. The term deacon in our English Bible is only used three times. When were the deacons first appointed. I believe that all Christians would tell you by the apostles. But the Bible doesn't say that. The ~~Bible~~