

The First Original Church

ACTS 18:24 Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.

The study of the *original Church established by the Apostle Paul at Ephesus* (around A.D. 53) represents the divine benchmark for local church order, doctrine, and spiritual maturity.

In the end-time restoration, **Malachi 4:5-6** and the Seventh Seal do not merely call believers back to "Pentecost" (which was the initial, baby stage of the Church), but back to **"another Ephesians"** the fully matured, Word-born Bride operating under original apostolic order.

1. Historical Context and Origin (A.D. 53 under the Pillar of Fire)

The Most Mature Church:

Ephesus was one of the three principal cities of Asia (alongside Jerusalem and Antioch). Paul founded the true faith in Ephesus during his missionary journeys and pastored there for about three years. Ephesus stands in the Word as the most spiritually mature church of the New Testament era.

The Christian Era Before the Fall:

The early Ephesian Church operated during the *first 20 years of the Christian era* (A.D. 33 to A.D. 53). This era was governed directly by the *Pillar of Fire* before the Church fell into human organization and entered the Seven Church Ages.

The Unchangeable Pattern:

The original Ephesian Church was led entirely by the Holy Spirit without human denominational organization. It possessed the pure, unadulterated Word and manifested the power of the Holy Ghost. What God established at the beginning stands as the immutable standard by which all subsequent ages and ministries are judged.

2. From Elijah's Reform (John's Baptism) to Upper Room Life

As we see in **Acts 18:24-26**, before Paul arrived in Ephesus, a group of believers was already assembling outside denominational Judaism under the preaching of Apollos: Apollos (an eloquent Jew from Alexandria, mighty in the Scriptures) taught diligently about the coming Messiah but knew *only the baptism of John*. His followers in Ephesus lived clean, moral lives, believed in the ministry of Elijah (John the Baptist), hated denominational synagogues, and accepted water baptism unto repentance.

Lacking the Quickening Birth:

Despite being called out, zealous, and mighty in quotes, this group was *not yet born again*. They had never met anyone from the Upper Room and had no contact with a living member of the Body who carried the Holy Spirit life.

The Pre-Arranged Alignment:

In **Acts 18**, Aquila and Priscilla who were faithfully tutored fruits of Paul's ministry heard Apollos preach and *expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly*. When Apollos received life, he passed into the apostolic work.

ACTS 19:1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." 4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

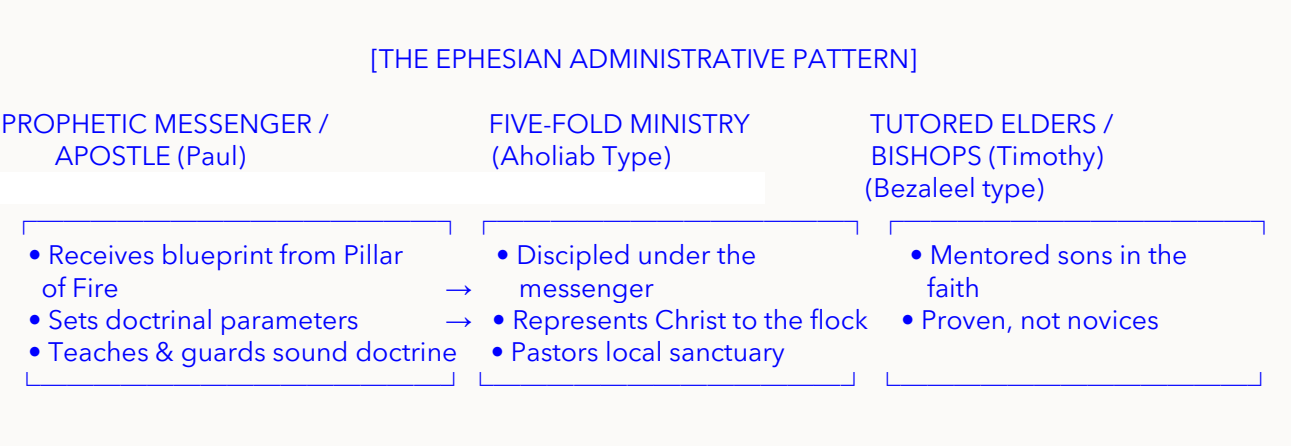
Paul's Arrival in A.D. 53 (Acts 19:1-6):

Passing through the upper coasts, Paul came to Ephesus and asked the twelve disciples: "*Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?*". Learning they were only baptized unto John's repentance, Paul instructed them that John pointed forward to Jesus.

Re-Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ:

Paul brought the true Godhead revelation and re-baptized them in the *Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. When Paul laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, quickening them into the true Body of Christ.

3. The Structural & Doctrinal Blueprint of Ephesian Apostolic Order



I. Paul's Compound Office and the Law of Representation

Paul held a compound, twofold office: he was the *Prophet-Messenger* sent to receive the revealed Word from the Pillar of Fire for his age, and he was the *Apostle/Father* who set the Ephesian Church in doctrinal order. Under the *Law of Representation*, Paul represented Jesus Christ to the Ephesians ("ye received me... even as Christ Jesus", Galatians 4:14; Ephesians 4:21).

II. Bezaleel and Aholiab Typology

Bezaleel (The Messenger): In Old Testament typology, Moses received the heavenly vision, but *Bezaleel* was given the Spirit of Wisdom to build the Tabernacle and its furniture. Paul (and every age messenger) acts as Bezaleel, laying the exact Word foundation.

Aholiab (The Five-Fold Ministry): *Aholiab* stood as the disciplined apprentice under Bezaleel. The true five-fold ministry (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) acts as Aholiab, tutored under the age messenger to execute the building of the living Tabernacle.

III. Mentorship of Elders: The Father-Son Pattern (Paul and Timothy)

Spiritual Fatherhood: Paul did not build the Ephesian Church with "novices" or self-appointed leaders.

ACTS 16:1 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek.

ACTS 16:2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily. 6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

He picked up young *Timothy* (Acts 16:1-4), taking him on missionary journeys, tutoring, disciplining, and proving him over years.

I TIMOTHY 1:2 Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

I CORINTHIANS 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

Carrying the Mind of the Father: Timothy was not an independent, opinionated preacher; he carried the exact mind, doctrine, and ways of his spiritual father Paul. When Paul sent Timothy to an assembly, Timothy brought them into remembrance of Paul's ways in Christ. Timothy eventually became the first bishop over the local church at Ephesus.

The Book of Ephesians outlines the exact spiritual roadmap through which the local church matures from the initial Holy Spirit birth into full adoption and Capstone placement:

1. **Ephesians 1:13-14 (The Word of Truth & The Earnest):** After hearing the Word of Truth and believing, believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. This initial Holy Spirit baptism is the earnest (*arrhabon*: down payment or engagement pledge) of their inheritance, waiting for the final redemption of the purchased possession.
2. **Ephesians 1:15-16 (Apostolic Faith and Love):** Paul commends the Ephesians for their initial faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints. This represents the pure, unadulterated Ephesian faith that was delivered to the saints before the Dark Ages.

3. **Ephesians 1:17-18 (The Prayer for Wisdom & Revelation / The 7th Seal):** Although the Ephesians were sealed and mature, Paul prayed that God would give them "the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him".
4. This prayer represents the unfolding of the *Son of Man Omega ministry* (the 7th Seal / Seven Thunders / Headstone), which opens the eyes of understanding to reveal the hidden mysteries and the hope of His calling.
5. **Ephesians 1:19-23 (Exceeding Power, Resurrections, & Headship):** The revelation culminates in the manifestation of *resurrection power* (*Romans 8:11*), positionally placing adopted sons under the Headship of Christ, where the Church stands as the complete fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

Feature / Dimension	Denominational / Message Lodges	The Restored Ephesian Pattern Church
Origin & Calling	Human boards, self-appointment, or tape-listening groups.	Birthered through a member of the Body carrying Zoe life; set in order by apostolic ministry.
Doctrinal Authority	Private interpretations, quote-gathering, or human creeds.	Anchored strictly to the unadulterated Word and sound apostolic doctrine.
Leadership Model	Novices placed immediately; "pop-up" pastors; board rule.	Mentored elders (Timothy type) tutored under apostolic fatherhood before pastoral placement.
Spiritual Goal	Stagnates in repetitive legalism or emotionalism.	Progresses from the initial <i>earnest</i> into 7th Seal enlightenment, adoption, and Rapturing Faith.

The Ephesian Pattern: Roadmap to Apostolic Order & Maturity

The original Church established at Ephesus (A.D. 53) serves as the unchangeable blueprint for local church order and spiritual growth, demonstrating a clear, step-by-step process of restoration.

Phase 1: The Transition to Apostolic Life (Acts 18–19)

Phase 2: Progression to Full Adoption (Ephesians 1)



The Two-Stage Ephesian Pattern

Stage 1: The Preliminary Calling Out Under Elijah/Apollos (Separated, Zealous, Lacking Life)

The entry into the *Ephesian Pattern* begins with an initial phase of separation. Under the prophetic voice of Elijah (John the Baptist in Alpha; the 7th Angel in Omega), believers are awakened to the errors of organized religion and called out of denominational systems.

Stage 1: The Preliminary Calling Out

- Called out of denominational synagogues under Elijah's message.
- Led by eloquent, mighty scriptural teachers (the Apollos type).
- Clean, moral, non-denominational living; water baptism unto repentance.
- *Critical Deficit*: Lacks Upper Room Life and the New Birth

The Typology of Apollos and the Ephesian Disciples

In **Acts 18:24-25**, scripture introduces Apollos an eloquent Jew, mighty in the scriptures, and fervent in spirit, who spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

Apollos gathered twelve disciples in Ephesus who followed his ministry (**Acts 19:1-3**):

- *Denominational Separation*: They rejected the Pharisaic and Sadducean synagogues, holding strictly to John's message that "*the axe is laid unto the root of the trees*".
- *Moral Alignment*: They maintained clean, separated lives, avoiding worldly corruption, cut-off hair, and immoral conduct.
- *Adherence to Elijah's Message*: They quoted Elijah, believed in his water baptism unto repentance, and anticipated the coming Messiah.

The Condition of "Message Without Life"

Despite their separation, scriptural knowledge, and zeal for Elijah, these twelve disciples were *spiritually dead*. They had no contact with anyone from the Upper Room and had never heard whether there was any Holy Ghost (**Acts 19:2**). This represents an end-time assembly that is called out of denomination and quotes the end-time Elijah yet remains unregenerate. They possess intellectual agreement with vindicated truth but lack the indwelling seed germ of eternal life.

Stage 2: Spiritual Quickening Via a Born-Again Member of Christ's Body

Spiritual quickening does not occur automatically by leaving a denomination or memorizing tape quotes. It requires a second, distinct experience: *the transmission of Life through a born-again member of the Body of Christ*.

Stage 2: Spiritual Quickening & Life

- Life passes strictly through a living member of Christ's Body.
- Neither the Pillar of Fire nor an Angel imparts New Birth directly without human agency (e.g., Saul/Ananias; Philip/Eunuch)
- Hearing the "Word of Truth" quickens the dormant predestinated gene (Ephesians 1:13).
- True Evidence: "The Word Test"—the ability to receive and understand uncompromised doctrine (1 John 4:1-6)
- **I JOHN 4:1** Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

The Law of Transmission Through the Body

Spiritual Life cannot be obtained directly from an Angel, a book, an audio recording, or even the Pillar of Fire on the outside. When the Pillar of Fire struck Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:3-6**), it blinded and convicted him, but he was not birthed into the Body until *Ananias* a living member of Christ's Body laid hands on him.

When an Angel directed Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch (**Acts 8:26-38**), the Angel did not impart the Holy Ghost; the seed germ of Life was transmitted through *Philip*, a born-again member of the Body.

Hearing the Word of Truth (Ephesians 1:13)

When Paul arrived in Ephesus (**Acts 19:1-7**), he preached the *Word of Truth*, re-baptized the disciples in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, laid hands on them, and passed Life into them. As outlined in **Ephesians 1:13**, hearing the Word of Truth from a sent servant quickens the dormant, predestinated gene of life within the believer, sealing them with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Redefining the True Evidence of the Holy Ghost

While traditional theology links the Holy Ghost baptism to emotional gifts or speaking in tongues, the Ephesian Pattern establishes *The Word Test* (**1 John 4:1-6**) as the ultimate evidence of New Birth: The Holy Ghost gene endows the believer with spiritual discernment the specific ability to receive, comprehend, and align with the uncompromised Word of God promised for their day. If an individual or minister cannot receive corrected doctrine (such as the true Godhead or scriptural baptism), it demonstrates an absence of the inner seed germ, regardless of their religious zeal or moral lifestyle.

Paul's Dual Role: Messenger to the First Church Age and Apostle Under the Pillar of Fire

A foundational key to understanding end-time church mechanics is recognizing the *compound scripture* and *dual role* fulfilled by the Apostle Paul.

1. Operation Under the Pillar of Fire (The First 20 Years / Apostolic Era)

Before the first church age fell into denominational decay, there existed a 20-year window (A.D. 33-53) known as the *Apostolic Era* or *Christian Era*. During this time, Paul did not function merely as an age messenger under star light; he operated directly under the *Pillar of Fire*. His ministry had these attributes:

- *Direct Revelation*: Paul received his gospel directly from Jesus Christ via the Pillar of Fire in the Arabian desert (**Galatians 1:11-12**)
 - **GALATIANS 1:11** But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- *Master Builder*: He established the original, mature Ephesian Church, positionally placing it in order and delivering the apostolic commandments (**1 Corinthians 3:10**; **1 Corinthians 14:37**; **Galatians 1:8-9**)

- **GALATIANS 1:8** But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
- **1 CORINTHIANS 3:10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.
- **1 CORINTHIANS 14:37** If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.
- *Spiritual Headship:* In Ephesus, Paul stood as Christ in representation his word was Jesus teaching them, and receiving Paul was receiving Christ (John 13:20; Galatians 4:14; Ephesians 4:20-21)
 - **JOHN 13:20** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.
 - **GALATIANS 4:14** And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.
 - **EPHESIANS 4:20** But ye have not so learned Christ; 21 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
- *Star Messenger to the First Church Age:* When the early church began to decline and lose its first love (**Revelation 2:4**), Paul was assigned as the *Star Messenger to the Ephesian Church Age*. In this capacity, he ministered under the 4th Seal within the "Son of God" dispensation, bringing the Word to a fallen church age under star light.
 - **REVELATION 2:4** Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

The End-Time Parallel (The 7th Angel's Dual Ministry)

Paul's dual operation provides the exact typology for the end-time prophetic ministry (**Revelation 10:7 / Malachi 4:5-6**):

PAUL (Alpha) WILLIAM BRANHAM (Omega)

1. Star Messenger to 1st Age
(Fallen Church Era)

1. Star Messenger to 7th Age (Rev 3:14 / Star)

=

2. Apostle under Pillar
of Fire (Apostolic)

= 2. Prophet under Pillar
of Fire (Rev 10:7 / Sun)

Just as Paul ministered to a fallen age while simultaneously operating under the Pillar of Fire to establish Ephesian perfection, the 7th angel messenger served as the Laodicean Star Messenger (**Revelation 3:14**) while simultaneously operating under the Pillar of Fire (**Revelation 10:1-7**) as the Sun Messenger to call the Bride out of Laodicea.

The Bride in the end time is not called back to the Pentecostal upper room stage; she is called back to the *original Ephesian Pattern* established by Paul under the Pillar of Fire, preparing her to receive the 7th Seal and *Rapturing Faith* (**Ephesians 1:17-20**).

Apostolic Defence and Pastoral Care:

The Apostle Paul stands as the *original pattern and master builder* for church order. His ministry was defined by an absolute, uncompromising adherence to Word standards. Unlike leaders who compromise doctrine or standards for the sake of artificial peace, popularity, or human sentiment, Paul demonstrated that true apostolic love defends the unadulterated Word above all else.

1. The Stand Against John Mark at Pamphylia (Acts 15:38-40)

- *Uncompromising Standards for Mission Work:* When John Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas at Pamphylia and "*went not with them to the work,*" Paul viewed his departure as a failure to meet the essential testing of the mission field.
- *Word Duty Over Sentiment:* When Barnabas wanted to give his nephew John Mark a second chance on their next missionary journey, Paul firmly refused. While Barnabas reasoned from personal mercy ("*God is rich in mercy*"), Paul reasoned from the uncompromising requirements of God's work: "*When we needed him, he was not there*".
- *Sharp Contention Without Compromise:* The conflict was inevitable and could not be avoided. Paul refused to lower the bar of ministerial reliability for family ties or personal affection, proving that the work of God and Word qualifications come before natural relationships.

2. Withstanding Peter to His Face at Antioch (Galatians 2:11-14)

No Respector of Persons: When the Apostle Peter withdrew from eating with Gentile believers out of fear of Judaizers from Jerusalem, his compromise led others and even Barnabas into dissimulation.

Public Defence of Gospel Integrity: Paul did not stay silent, nor did he hide behind backroom politics or defer to Peter's seniority as an apostle who had walked with Jesus in the flesh. Seeing that they "*walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel*", Paul withstood Peter to his face publicly before all.

Unifying the Church Through Truth: Paul's sharp, direct confrontation saved the early Church from splitting into Jewish and Gentile factions, restoring true unity based strictly on Word standards.

3. Set for the Defence of the Gospel (Philippians 1:17)

The Guardian of the Pattern: Paul declared that he was "*set for the defence of the gospel*". He charged his spiritual sons to "*hold fast the pattern of sound words*" and instructed Timothy to charge ministers that they "*teach no other doctrine*".

An Anathema on Deviation: So anchored was Paul to the revelation given to him by the Pillar of Fire that he pronounced a solemn curse upon anyone including himself or an angel from heaven who would preach any other gospel or alter the standard.

Distinction Between Apostolic Defence and Pastoral Care: The local pastors are called to be peaceable, gentle, and hospitable in shepherding the local flock, the apostolic office carries a sharp sword to contend for the faith, expose false workers, and maintain strict doctrinal parameters across assemblies.

Summary Matrix: Paul's Defence of Word Standards

Conflict / Situation	Opposing Spirit or Influence	Paul's Word Standard Reaction	Source Outcome
John Mark at Pamphylia	Unreliability, quitting the work, familial sentiment (<i>Barnabas</i>)	Refused to take an unproven, unreliable worker on the mission field.	Established that ministerial office requires proven, tested endurance.

Peter's Hypocrisy at Antioch	Judaizing legalism, fear of man, dissimulation (<i>Peter & Barnabas</i>)	Withstood Peter to his face publicly for violating Gospel truth.	Preserved the purity of Grace and prevented a division in the Early Church.
False Apostles & Seducers	Private interpretations, human traditions, creepers-in	Pronounced an anathema on any altered gospel; commanded strict adherence to the pattern.	Provided an absolute doctrinal benchmark for all seven Church Ages.

Role of mentored elders

Under the restored *Ephesian pattern*, the role of *mentored elders* (typified in Scripture by ministers like Timothy, Titus, Tychicus, Onesimus, and Epaphras) is a foundational element in establishing church order, guarding sound doctrine, and bringing the Bride into the *Unity of the Faith*.

A true five-fold minister or spiritual elder cannot be produced by seminary education, human appointment, or self-elevation; rather, elders are shaped through *apostolic fatherhood*, *spiritual apprenticeship*, and *proven character*.

The Mechanics of Mentorship: The Father-Son Pattern

The Bezaleel and Aholiab Pattern: In Old Testament typology, Moses received the master plan on the mountain, Bezaleel was given divine wisdom to execute the blueprint, and *Aholiab stood as the apprentice/discipled helper* under Bezaleel. Under the Ephesian pattern, church age messengers and true apostles act as spiritual fathers (Bezaleel), while mentored elders act as apprentices (Aholiab) who are tutored to carry out the exact pattern of the Word.

Not a Novice: The Scriptures strictly prohibit placing a "novice" or recent convert into spiritual leadership, as unproven leadership triggers pride and spiritual failure. Young elders must first undergo a season of being tutored, disciplined, tested, and proven before being entrusted with pastoral oversight.

Singleness of Alignment: The Ephesian pattern requires that a mentored elder carry the exact mind, spirit, and doctrinal vision of his spiritual father. An elder cannot have "two spiritual fathers" or mix conflicting doctrines; his loyalty belongs strictly to the unadulterated Word and the apostolic Message.

Feeding the Flock with Knowledge and Understanding: The highest calling of an elder is to shepherd and feed the sheep. The elder must be "apt to teach" (**1 Timothy 3:2**), spending time in prayer and deep Word study so that he can clearly communicate the concepts of the opened Word and build up the saints.

JEREMIAH 3:15 KJV And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

ACTS 20:28 KJV Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Guarding Doctrinal Purity: Mentored elders act as doctrinal watchmen. Having been faithfully taught by an apostle or senior minister, their commission is to charge the church that they "teach no other doctrine" (**1 Timothy 1:3**), silencing false talkers, rejecting fables, and preserving the exact faith delivered to them.

1 TIMOTHY 1:3 KJV As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, 4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

1 TIMOTHY 4:16 KJV Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

In **Titus 1:9-11**, the Apostle Paul provides Titus his mentored son in the faith with the divine blueprint for selecting, qualifying, and empowering local elders (*bishops*) to guard the local church.

TITUS 1:9 KJV Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

This passage sits at the very heart of *Ephesian Apostolic Order*, establishing how mentored elders must maintain doctrinal purity, confront false teachers, and protect both the local church and the Christian home.

The Elder's Qualification (Titus 1:9)

Holding Fast the Word & Sound Doctrine

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

A true elder cannot be a self-appointed novice or a graduate of human theology. He must "hold fast" (*cleave to, guard, and preserve*) the exact pattern of sound words delivered to him through vindicated apostolic teaching. He does not invent his own private interpretation or "lean on his own understanding".

The Nature of "Sound Doctrine": The word sound literally means "wholesome, healthy, and restoring". Sound doctrine consists of divine instructions (*didache*) breathed out by God that bring whole spiritual health, character transformation, and maturity to the Body of Christ.

Exhorting and Convincing Gainsayers: An elder is given a two-edged sword: he uses sound doctrine to *exhort* (feed, build up, and comfort) the flock, and to *convince gainsayers* (opposers and critics of the revealed Word). A true minister does not remain neutral when error enters; he uses the Word to contrast error, shred false concepts, and kill the influence of deceptive teaching.

Identifying the Threat – Unruly Vain Talkers & "They of the Circumcision" (Titus 1:10)

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:"

Unruly (Apeitheia): In the Greek New Testament, *apeitheia* occurs 7 times and is tightly woven with the concept of wilful unbelief:

- The "Sons of Disobedience": In *Ephesians 2:2* and *Ephesians 5:6*, the phrase (sons/children of disobedience) is used to describe those living in open rebellion against God's will.
- Disobedience vs. Unbelief: New Testament writers often treat *apeitheia* (obstinate disobedience) as the natural, outward expression of *apistia* (a lack of faith or distrust).

These are rebellious, unpersuaded ministers who refuse to yield to divine authority, apostolic order, or the headship of the Word. They act as self-willed "busybodies" outside of God's order.

Vain Talkers and Deceivers: "Vain talkers" bring empty concepts originating from human logic or bottomless-pit ideas rather than the rock of God's Word. They wrap dangerous, soul-killing errors in plausible pretenses and golden expressions to beguile simple, ungrounded souls.

"Specially They of the Circumcision":

- *Historically:* In Paul's day, these were Judaizers who sought to bring believers back under legalistic Old Testament rites, mixing the light of a past dispensation with the present truth.
- *Prophetically:* This typifies the "twins" or borderline believers within religious and "Message" circles those in "message lodges" who quote the prophet or hold an outward form of godliness, but mix the message with denominational creeds, traditions (such as Oneness or Trinitarian concepts), and human fables.

The Apostolic Command – Stopping Mouths & Protecting Houses (Titus 1:11)

"Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

"Whose Mouths Must Be Stopped": False doctrine cannot be tolerated, compromised with, or covered up under an unbiblical "good old boys" club or false religious diplomacy. Paul commands that their mouths be stopped meaning an apostle or mentored elder must boldly expose, rebuke, and strip false teachers of their spiritual influence before they infect the sheep.

"Who Subvert Whole Houses": False teachers "creep into houses", targeting unstable individuals, perverting headship, and subverting entire families and local assemblies.

When a false minister undermines the Word in a home, he breaks down the husband's authority as king and priest, causing spiritual ruin and division.

"For Filthy Lucre's Sake": The underlying motive of these false talkers is personal gain, covetousness, financial support, and the praise/honour of men. They "suppose that gain is godliness" and make merchandise of the saints by holding forth flesh-indulgent principles, using religion as a profitable trade rather than serving Christ in sincerity.

The Ephesian Contrast in **Titus 1:9-11**

Attribute	The Mentored Ephesian Elder (vs. 9)	The Unruly Gainsayer / Deceiver (vs. 10-11)
Source of Teaching	Holds fast the faithful Word as taught by apostolic ministry	Vain jangling, human fables, and bottomless-pit concepts
Doctrinal Fruit	Sound, healthy doctrine that perfects and builds up the flock	Subverts whole houses, corrupts minds, and spreads spiritual death
Motive & Heart	Blameless steward feeding the flock; untangled from filthy lucre	Covetousness; seeking money, popularity, and the honour of men
Apostolic Action Required	Exhort, teach, and ordain in every city under order	Rebuke sharply; <i>stop their mouths</i> and cut off their influence

Establishing Order in Sister Churches and Outposts: Just as Paul left Titus in Crete to "set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city" (**Titus 1:5**), mentored elders are deployed to newly established groups or foreign mission outposts. They deliver the apostolic decrees, set local administrative order, and ensure the assembly is grounded on a solid foundation.

Carrying the Mind of Apostolic Leadership: When an apostle cannot physically visit an assembly, he sends a trusted, mentored son like Timothy or Tychicus.

Because these elders know the father's ways and doctrine thoroughly, they bring the local church into exact remembrance of the Word, ensuring total alignment across all assemblies.

Assisting the Local Pastor and Protecting the Sanctuary: Within a local assembly, elders serve as spiritual pillars and helpers to the pastor. They help maintain order during services, step in to handle minor disputes or disturbances, visit the sick, and confidentially intercede for struggling saints so the pastor is not overwhelmed.

Two Classifications: Five-Fold Elders vs. Appointed Elders

There is a clear distinction between the two ways elders' function within the Body:

Attribute	Five-Fold Elders (Pastors / Bishops)	Appointed Elders (Local Helpers)
Origin & Calling	Predestinated and birthed by God as part of the Ephesians 4:11 priesthood.	Appointed by apostles/ministers as local administrative helpers.
Development Path	Mentored as a young elder first, then voted in by the congregation as a full-time pastor.	Serves as a local helper or overseer of a small group/outpost.
Financial Support	Supported full-time by the tithing of the altar to remain untangled from secular work.	<i>Must hold secular jobs ("eat their own bread") so as not to burden small groups.</i>
Soul Accountability	Gives direct spiritual account for the souls of his local flock.	Acts as a caretaker/helper representing the ministry that appointed him.

Ephesian Mentored Elders: The Blueprint of Spiritual Leadership

Development & Mentorship Pattern



Spiritual Apprenticeship Over Human Elevation

Elders are formed through spiritual fatherhood and proven character, not seminary education.



Strict Prohibition of Novice Leadership

Unproven leaders are barred to prevent pride and ensure thorough testing before oversight.



Singleness of Alignment and Vision

Elders must carry the exact doctrinal vision and mind of their spiritual father.

Roles & Classifications

Three Primary Pastoral Responsibilities



Feed the Flock

Elders feed the flock with sound doctrine.



Guard Doctrinal Purity

They guard against false teachings and maintain doctrinal purity.



Set Order in Local Assemblies

Elders set and maintain order within local assemblies.



Classifications: Five-Fold vs. Appointed Elders

Core Functional Differences		
Attribute	Five-Fold Elders	Appointed Elders
Calling & Origin	 Predestinated Ephesians 4:11 priesthood	 Local administrative appointment
Financial Support	 Supported full-time by altar tithes	 Holds secular job ("eats own bread")
Accountability	 Gives direct spiritual account for local flock	 Acts as caretaker representing senior ministry

Pastor Louis Govindraj

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