

Refuting Those Who Contradict Truth

The Responsibility of Elders

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Elders are to confront and correct those who are teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to biblical truth. Therefore, elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community. Matthew 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-32; Titus 1:9

Matthew 7:13-27. Detecting False Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

** The way that leads to destruction is very accessible, and many enter. The way that leads to life is very restrictive, and few find it.*

A Tree and Its Fruit

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits.

** False prophets are those who claim to bear a message directly from God, but do not. These are dishonest people, and sooner or later you will be able to disqualify their message because of their lifestyle.*

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

** There are some people who appear to do great works for Jesus but actually practice lawlessness. He never knew them.*

The Two Foundations

24 “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

** Those who actually obey Jesus are the ones whose lives are built on a safe foundation.*

Guarding the Flock. Acts 20:28-32

28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

1. Elders (plural of *presbúteros*, [4245](#)) (Acts 20:17) are to pay attention to ([Present](#) tense, Plural [Imperative](#) of *proséchō*, [4337](#)) one another and to all the flock (*poímnion*, [4168](#)) (Acts 20:28).
2. The Holy Spirit has placed the elders among the flock as overseers (Plural of *epískopos*, [1985](#)) (Acts 20:28).
3. The elders / overseers are to shepherd ([Present](#) tense of *poimainō*, [4165](#)) the church of God (Acts 20:28).
4. This church (*ekklêsía*, [1577](#)) is extremely valuable because God purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
5. It is inevitable that savage wolves will come in among them (probably meaning among the church) and will not spare the flock (*poímnion*, [4168](#)) (Acts 20:29).
6. Even amongst the elders themselves men will arise, speaking distorted ([Perfect](#) Passive Participle of *diastéphō*, [1294](#)) things, in order to draw away ([Present](#) tense of *apospáō*, [645](#)) disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30).
7. Elders / Overseers are, therefore, commanded to stay on the alert ([Present](#) [Imperative](#) of *grégoréō*, [1127](#)), remembering that Paul didn't stop admonishing ([Present](#) tense of *nouthetéō*, [3560](#)) of each one of the elders with tears, night and

day, over the space of three years (Acts 20:31).

8. Paul gives these elders but two resources on which to draw in defending the flock (Acts 28:32):
 - a. God Himself
 - b. And the word of His grace (I take this to be the Bible), which is able to build up (the Church) and to give (to believers) the inheritance among all those having been set apart ([Perfect](#) Passive of *hagiádzō*, [37](#)).

Qualifications of Elders

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, 6 namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. 7 For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

1. Paul left Titus in Crete to set things in order and to appoint elders (plural of *presbúteros*, [4245](#)) in every city as he had previously directed him (Titus 1:5).
2. Each individual elder is also called an overseer (Singular of *epískopos*, [1985](#)) (Titus 1:7).
3. Among other qualifications, an elder / overseer must be one who is continually holding fast (or devoting himself) ([Present](#) tense of *antéchō*, [472](#)) to that which is in accordance with the teaching (*didachê*, [1322](#)) of the faithful word (*lógos*, [3056](#)).
4. He must devote himself to the teaching in such a way in order that he might be able both continually to exhort ([Present](#) tense of *parakaléō*, [3870](#)) in healthy teaching (*didaskalía*, [1319](#)) and to keep refuting or rebuking ([Present](#) tense of *elégchō*, [1651](#)) the ones contradicting ([Present](#) Participle of *antilégō*, [483](#)).

Summary.

1. There is a heavy emphasis in these passages on being able to detect, either by their teaching, or by their unbiblical lifestyle, false teachers and preachers.
2. Elders have a heavy responsibility to stand guard over the church over which the Holy Spirit has placed them as overseers.
3. False teaching and opposition to the truth seems inevitable.
4. Also, power-hungry leaders seem inevitable.
5. The elders must give themselves to the Word of God as it was taught by the Apostles to be able to be able to teach sound doctrine themselves, and also to be able to refute those who contradict God's Word.

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