



## Against An Elder

The Church is the kingdom of God that has a Supreme King that governs his subjects by laws and principles as set out in scripture. The Bible and only the Bible is the rule of law that dictates whether our practices will be accepted or rejected by God.

God's method of doing anything cannot be improved upon. David clearly stated "As for God his way is perfect." Psa. 18:30

Many times when approaching a subject the first thing under consideration is am I clear or free from guilt. Then if I feel that I am without blame then I will preach it or make my stand. But honestly as the old saying is "RIGHT IS RIGHT IF NO ONE DOES IT AND WRONG IS WRONG IF EVERYONE DOES IT!"

So from this point I begin this article with an open and honest confession.

**I HAVE VIOLATED THIS PRINCIPLE I AM GOING TO BE DECLARING IN THIS ARTICLE.**

I have repented to God privately and the flock I am trying to Pastor publicly. After all God is going to judge us all according to Paul's gospel not whether I have preached it or obeyed it. Rom. 2:16 No one is above the law even myself.

And with that said I begin.

Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles gives clear and concise instruction on how to correct a New Testament Elder. The passage we are going to be dealing with is not given to excuse an sinning Elder at the expense of the flock.

Rather it picks up a principle given to Moses by God on the biblical manner in which an elder can be called to record for his actions. Anything else other than this procedure is in direct violation of the Word of God. Now to the passage 1Timothy 5:17-20 "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward. Against an Elder receive not an accusation, but BEFORE two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear."

The first question what kind of Elder is this passage speaking of? The late Robert C. Cavaness said "Any text taken out of context is a pretext." Then the text will determine whether the Elder is a Gospel preacher or just an older saint. Note verse 17 "who labour in word and doctrine." Sounds like a preacher to me! "Who rule well" who rules over the Church Preaching Elders or the older brethren in the church? "Muzzle not the ox" same quote the Apostle used to teach the Church at Corinth that the Elder is to have control of the tithe. 1Cor.9:9 "The labourer is worthy of his reward" Paul quotes Jesus in his reference to the ministry. Luke 10:7 I know I may be over stressing this point but it has been said by some this was not speaking of preaching Elders. It would take a giant leap in logic to think the Elder in verse 19 is not the Elder in the preceding verses.

Now since we have established verse 19 is speaking of a New Testament

Elder let's examine this very detailed procedure. Paul did not come up with this formula himself but as a student of the Old Testament he is using the same process that God gave to Moses. Deuteronomy 19:15-19 this Judicial Procedure is the basis for trials of all civilized societies, we quote "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong Then BOTH THE MEN, BETWEEN WHOM THE CONTROVERSY IS, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the JUDGES SHALL

**MAKE A DILIGENT INQUISITION; and behold if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother; so shalt thou put evil away from among you, And those which remain shall hear, and fear...."**

**Note the presumption of innocence of the accused. The burden of proof is placed on the accusers not the accused. Lest someone would yet feel that I am forcing these passages to fit or is this principle binding on believers today. I will quote the Master teacher " It is written in your law *they had only the testimony of two men is true*" Jn. 8:17 Here Christ clearly states if they had only his word alone it would not be enough. The Father bore witness of him through the miracles that were done.**

**Not enough how about this famous quote "Woman, where are thine accusers? "Jn.8:10 Yet the greatest evidence is found in Mat.18:15-19 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between THEE AND HIM ALONE: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."**

**I realize this passage concerns any saint but if that is so and it is then it would most assuredly apply to the ministry. It is Paul the apostle who uses Deut. 19 and clearly elevates it to use it and only it in the correction of an Elder. 1Tim.5:19 is not a shield to protect the preacher at all costs. Quite the contrary this passage gives right to accuse the elder but in an orderly but fair and discreet form.**

**Here are my modest observations concerning this passage.**

- 1. Accusations can be brought against an Elder.**
- 2. These accusations must be brought by the Mosaic custom of two or three witnesses.**
- 3. It must not be heard except BEFORE or in FRONT of the accused Elder.**
- 4. Since it is built on the foundation of Deut. 19 then a diligent inquiry must be conducted to see if the witnesses can prove their accusation.**
- 5. If that Elder is found guilty he must be reproved before all. The Inquiry is necessary to see if the witnesses are true or false. Both the accuser and the accused can question those involved.**

**This high standard has not been set by men but by God Himself because of his care for the Church. How many Churches and ministries have we seen destroyed because of either unfounded or unproven rumors. Just because a lie is repeated often enough does not ever make it the truth. Nor does it matter who tells it or believes it that does not make it so. Much caution needs to be heeded when some person tries to scandalize the preacher or for that matter a saint.**

**Preacher nor saint has no right to hear an accusation against Apostolic Elder outside of his presence.**

**I hope this article will at least give some pause before we eagerly violate this God-given principle. I close with the words of the Apostle of our faith "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Luke 6:31**