

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

Introduction

There are many individuals and organizations that claim to be helping the world; such as churches, hospitals, schools among others. However, too often we find that these very institutions contribute to the world's problems rather than provide solutions. Of all these organizations, the "church" should be the prime source of goodness and truth in the world. The church of God, more correctly the Congregation of Elohim, was established by Elohim through His Uniquely Born Son Yeshua the Messiah to preach the Good News of His Stellar Government to help others repent and develop righteous character unto Salvation. Elohim appointed and empowered leaders among His congregation to make that happen. The Messiah Yeshua stated, "I will build my congregation and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." After His resurrection, just before His ascension, Yeshua commissioned the most faithful of His congregation as Apostles to go into all the world to preach the Good News of Elohim's Government, heal the sick, and baptize those who would believe by the power of His Holy Spirit. So, the Congregation of Elohim was established to accomplish the greatest good in the world through divine power.

Yet today we see organizations claiming to be the "church" that are divided into numerous *conflicting* denominations. These various organizations are led by "elders" and "pastors" who are self-appointed or appointed by their denominations rather than by the Holy Spirit. These types of elders and pastors, hence false ministers, have no spiritual power at all and seem to function only for financial gain and or to control others. Too often, their false church groups end up doing more harm than good and cause people to doubt the Scriptures or the reality of Elohim rather than to believe. *To be clear*, this is not to say that every person leading and serving a congregation before having received Divine power is false. For, there are some sincere individuals who may not yet have Divine power but are humbly seeking to serve Elohim and uniting others to serve Him as well. These *are not false ministers* but are individuals who love Elohim and His people and see the need to do good. False ministers *are those who claim* to

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

have Divine authority which they don't really have. This can pose a major problem for those of us who want to assemble and work in a congregation led by ministers and pastors that are truly appointed by Elohim and not by man or man-made organizations. Thus, our hearts and minds ask how can we know for sure that a person claiming to be an elder or pastor was truly appointed by Elohim? *How can we know* if the person is a false minister? To solve this problem, *we need to* learn and accept the Biblical declarations of what the characteristics, qualifications, and function of true ministers appointed by Elohim are. This will help us know who a true elder or pastor is without any qualms. Then, of course false ministers will become more easily recognizable by their lack of the Scriptural mandated qualities. Anyone who claims to be appointed by Elohim but lacks the qualities is either deluded or a deceiver. The following are the Biblical consensus on this matter to help us identify true ministers and reject false ones.

1. True Ministers Are Appointed by Elohim and Given Divine Virtue and Power as Proof

Elohim, by His First or Old Covenant, established ancient Israel as His people and appointed Spirit-led prophets, holy priests, righteous tribal leaders, zealous judges and kings to govern them by His Laws in equity and peace to serve as a light to other nations. There we find that the prediluvian prophets, Enoch and Noah, were divinely selected and empowered to accomplish their assigned responsibilities. Later we find the postdiluvian patriarchs and prophets such as Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob (Israel), Moses, Joshua were likewise given tasks and divine power. It was the same for all the judges, like Deborah and Samuel, as well as the righteous kings and prophets; every single one of them were Divinely selected and appointed exclusively by Elohim. Every one of them were Divinely given an important task, specific instructions and the divine power to accomplish the job. Several millennia later, Elohim established a New Covenant in Messiah Yeshua His Uniquely Born Son, to call-out and unite all repentant faithful people in all nations, including Israel, as His Congregation of Elohim throughout the generations. For the success of His New Covenant congregations, He selects the most devoted members of the congregation to serve as apostles, pastors, prophets, deacons, and

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

evangelists. Members of the congregation who serve in those roles are *exclusively selected by Elohim* to lovingly perform important duties as members of the congregation for the whole congregation. True ministers are given *tremendous responsibilities* much if not all, which *cannot be done* through human or natural ability. As in the Old Covenant, Elohim *always equips* His elect servants with the Divine power to successfully accomplish their assigned tasks. *Important* to keep in mind is that Elohim did and *continues* to do this so that many may develop righteous character unto salvation while being a light and model for the world to witness.

Another important sign of a true minister is that he or she will be a truly *repentant* divinely *virtuous* person, with *steadfast* genuine *faith* and *zealous love* for Elohim, His Son, and His congregation. They do not love the world system or any of its vulgar or deleterious ideologies and products. They have no interest in irreverent entertainments or musings. Of course, they *don't smoke* or knowingly consume or use any product that is harmful to themselves and others. They don't knowingly support anything that is contrary to sound doctrine; that doesn't honor Elohim and His Son. They would never encourage or suggest the use of anything known to be harmful. **How could they?!** After all, *by the Spirit*, they are *boundlessly devoted* to doing good and loving others as exemplified by their beloved Master Yeshua. *They are* selected by Elohim for being the most *devoted* and *virtuous* of the members. Along with studying the Scriptures and prayer, they set their minds on whatever things are *true*, whatever things are *noble*, whatever things are *just*, whatever things are *pure*, whatever things are *lovely*, whatever things are of *good report*, if there is any *virtue* and if there is anything *praiseworthy*. As directed by Yeshua, they *meditate* on *these* things (Philippians 4:8). They are those whose hearts long to operate in unity of the Son for the spiritual and physical edification of the whole congregation to Elohim's praise. They are those who *zealously keep their body as a pure* and undefiled *temple* of the *Holy Spirit*. They are not ashamed to be regarded as fools for the sake of the Master. For this cause the Son is not ashamed to call them His brethren and gives and entrust to them the Divine power to fulfill their ministerial roles effectively with joy; not dolefully.

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

Again, those who claim to be Divinely appointed ministers but don't have the divine power and virtues are not Elohim's ministers at all. At best, some may be decent well-meaning people, but being decent and well-meaning are not the Scriptural requirements. *A zealous love* for Elohim manifested by *blameless piety* and the evident gift or *gifts of the Holy Spirit* are the *signs* of a true minister. This is starkly evident throughout the Old and New Testament without exception. Decent and *well-meaning people* who are seeking to serve Elohim *must* earnestly *seek* and *pray* for the Divine power so they can become ministers truly appointed by Elohim; well able to help others develop faith based on the demonstration of the power of Elohim and not on words alone. The following is a synopsis of the definitions, characteristics, qualifications, and function of these true ministers of Elohim.

- **Apostles of Messiah:**

- **Definition** – In Hebrew, shalach (h7971) and in Greek, ap-os'-tol-os (g652, g654). A delegate; specially, an ambassador of the Gospel; officially a commissioner of Messiah ("apostle") (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent.
- **Characteristics** – Zealously devoted to Elohim and His Messiah above everything, everyone and even above life.
- **Qualifications** – The individual must have had an actual real-life visit from Messiah and was given divine powers and authorization to serve as Messiah's apostle.
- **Functions** – A witness to Messiah's life, ministry, and resurrection. *“Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Yeshua went in and out among us, “beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a **witness** with us of His **resurrection**”* (Acts 1:21-22). Preach the Good News of the Government of Elohim to establish and organize Congregations of Elohim in specific locations and, appoint ministers to support each congregation. They are to, *“Go into all the world and **preach the Gospel** to every*

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

creature. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15-16).

• **Prophets:**

- **Definition** – In Hebrew, navee (h5030) in Greek prophētēs (g4396). A prophet or (generally) inspired man: - prophecy, that prophesy, prophet.
- **Characteristics** – Meek, surrendered to Elohim, reporting only what Elohim dictates and authorizes him or her to say.
- **Qualifications** – Veritably divinely empowered to communicate messages received directly from Elohim, performs miraculous signs, and never teaches anything contrary to the law and testimony. He or she receives knowledge of the future and or instructions directly from the Holy Spirit of Elohim; not by calculations or study. Elohim makes it clear, “**Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Eternal, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream**” (Numbers 12:6). A select few like Moses received information face-to-face (Numbers 12:7-8).
- **Functions** – They accurately convey Elohim’s directives and intent to the congregations to edify the congregations and or to warn them of danger. Elohim instructed Moses “*I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which he speaks in My name, I will require it of him. But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the ETERNAL has not spoken? when a prophet speaks in the name of the ETERNAL, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the ETERNAL has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him’*” (Deuteronomy 18:18-22). The Apostle Peter taught, “for prophecy **never** came **by the will of man**,

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

but *holy men of Elohim* spoke as they were moved by the *Holy Spirit*.

Note: Prophecy is a gift *every member* of the congregation *should poses* or *must earnestly seek* after. The Apostle Paul taught “*Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy*” (1Corinthians 14:1). All the necessary spiritual gifts are listed in chapter 11; the most important of them is prophesy. Paul also stated “*I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification*” (1Corinthians 14:5). Furthermore, Paul stated “*But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship Elohim and report that Elohim is truly among you*” (1Corinthians 14:23-25). This is how it was *always done* throughout the record of Scripture; *not by* men toting *only* lots of clever speeches and or sermons. The divine power of Spirit must be the source. Since this is the case by Apostolic teaching, a truly divinely appointed minister, in addition to virtuous love, *must at least have the gift of prophecy*. For as the Apostle John made clear, “*For the testimony of Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy*” (Revelations 19:10).

• **Elders (*Deacons and Pastors*):**

- **Definition** – In Hebrew, zä·kän (h2204) in Greek presbyteros (g4245). Old aged, ancient person, fully mature men and women. In context, the most mature/qualified person given authority to lead and serve in a specific congregation.
- **Characteristics** – Paul taught “*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable...*”
- **Qualifications** – Also from Paul, “*Able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know*

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of Elohim?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover, he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil” (1Ti 3:2-7).

- **Functions** – The Apostle Peter taught, “**Shepherd** the flock of Elohim which is among you, serving as **overseers**, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being **examples** to the flock” (1Pe 5:1-3). James a Bondservant of Elohim and brother of the Messiah taught, “**Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the congregation, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**” (James 5:14-15). They support the general assembly by **teaching, forgiving sins** as well as **healing all sicknesses** according to the directives of the prophets, apostles set by the Messiah.

- **Evangelists:**

- **Definition** – In Hebrew *bä·sar* (h1319) to gladden with good news, to announce (salvation) as good news, preach; in Greek *yü-än-ge-lēs-tā's* (g2097). A bringer of good tidings. Preachers of the Good News who are not apostles.
- **Characteristics** – People with honest reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, (Acts 6:2, 3,5).
- **Qualifications** – Same as the above characteristics.
- **Functions** – Proclaim and spread the Good News all over with divine virtuous signs and wonders as Messiah directs by His Spirit or angels (Acts.6-5; Acts 8:5-6, 12-13, 26-39; Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5). So, no one can be a true evangelist by natural ability or by going to some seminary.

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

• **Widows:**

- **Definition** – In Hebrew *al-mä-nä* (h490); in Greek *khā'-rā* (g5503). Women who are single due to the passing of their husbands. Specifically those who will be supported by the congregation and serve the congregation as widows “in the number” (1 Timothy 5:9).
- **Characteristics** – Paul taught, “*Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusts in Elohim, and continues in supplications and prayers night and day*” (1 Timothy 5:5).
- **Qualifications** – Paul instructed that a widow *must be* at **least 60** years old, **married only once**. He also stated they must be “*well reported for good works; have brought up children, lodged strangers, served the saints, relieved the afflicted, and diligently followed every good work*” (1 Timothy 5:9-10).
- **Functions** – Supports the congregation by earnest prayers night and day (Luke 2:34).
Note: Widowhood is not directly identified as a ministry, but the descriptions, qualifications and lifestyle requirements lend to benefit and edify the congregation. This in my opinion is a type of ministry.

2. The Efficacy of True Ministers

True ministers were and are appointed by Elohim to effectively encourage people everywhere to forsake evil and turn to Elohim, to believe the Good News, to be baptized by water, and by the Holy Spirit of Elohim in the Name Yeshua the Uniquely Born Son of Elohim and Messiah. These very few ministers accomplish this work by the evident power of the Spirit. They preach only the true Gospel proclaimed by the Apostles and Prophets as set by Yeshua the Master. As they do so, the Spirit testifies on their behalf by empowering them to heal the sick without doctors or medicines, do miracles, foretell future events to help others, and other divine virtuous miracles for the edification of the congregation. When the Master commissioned His first New Covenant apostles He told them, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in*

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The Apostle Paul’s own experience testified to that, “*in mighty **signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of Elohim, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Messiah***” (Romans 15:19). Important to note, they only do virtuous miracles, not palm reading, spells or any such demonic activity. As a result of their service, those helped come to know and appreciate Elohim, stop doing evil, believe in the Gospel, and get baptized in the Anointed Savior’s authority. In brief, they help sinners become genuinely righteous lovers of Elohim and the Son, citizens of His government who do only good on earth. This has the effect of gradually making the world a better place until it becomes the Kingdom of Elohim and of His Messiah. Remember the Master said “***Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father***” (John 14:12). So, the Master sets the standard, not man or any religious organization. True elders/pastors of Elohim must be able to do great works by the power of the Holy Spirit and those who are do so.

3. False Ministers

False ministers existed long before Israel; not very long after the fall of mankind through Adam’s sin in Eden. False leaders are those who boast of being ministers of light but in reality, were not appointed by Elohim. Rather they were appointed by organizations or were self-appointed. These false ministers go to seminaries or other training to get their false man-made credentials. With their fake qualifications, they obtain bogus positions as priests, prophets, apostles, and more commonly as pastors, deacons, and evangelists without any approval from Elohim. You can easily identify false elders and pastors by their inability to live a consistently righteous loving lifestyle and by their lack of any Divine virtuous gift of the Holy Spirit. They make all types of theological or intellectual excuse for their inability to live right and do any work by Divine power. Whatever title they may give themselves, their goals focus on accumulating funds to build organizations, church buildings, and other self-

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

serving purposes. They gain members by feel-good messages, fear tactics, bogus miracles, and may even do demonic lying wonders. Considering their scripturally aberrant doctrines, activities, and faith hindering results, these ministers tend to be in pursuit of financial gain and or the control of others. So, don't let them deceive or detain you with talk. Remember and hold fast to words of the Master "...he who believes in Me...greater works than these he will do". In line with that, the Apostle Paul said, "*And my speech and my preaching were **not** with **persuasive** words of **human** wisdom, **but in demonstration** of the **Spirit** and of **power***" (1Corinthians 2:4). The following are characteristics by which false ministers can be recognized.

The Perniciousness of false Ministers

It is certain and simple, in all cases, whether they call themselves priests, prophets, apostles, elders, evangelists, or pastors; they don't have sound doctrine. Here are some harmful doctrines common to false ministers.

1. They reject the law and testimony of Elohim and Messiah.
2. They do not teach faith and love-based obedience to Elohim
3. They relax the law, obedience, and don't teach genuine repentance
4. They slander those who do obey the law from faith and love in Elohim as mere legalists.
5. They reduce grace to undeserved forgiveness and exclude that it really means Elohim's unmerited favor that enables us to turn from sin, give us divine power to overcome sin, and the world unto everlasting life.
6. They talk of faith, but don't have any power to do the virtuous works of Elohim; such as effecting forgiveness of sins, healings, and miracles by the Holy Spirit. Remember, Elohim empowers and requires His true elders to heal all manner of sickness in the congregation. The false ministers will always include "*if it is your will*" in their prayers as a phony excuse *for their lack* of true *faith* and divine *authority* to ask for *heal*. Don't accept or fall for that. In James 5:14-15, Paul taught the members of the congregation, "*Is*

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the congregation, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the Name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven". Paul along with all the apostles and prophets *taught that it is Elohim's will to heal His repentant people*. False ministers that claim to have power are either charlatans or those involved with demonic forces. They can do nothing in the Master's Name. The time will come when they will hear the Master Yeshua tell them to "*I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness*" (Matthew 7:23). They deceive themselves and others being spurious pretenders.

Don't be *charmed or deceived* by those that study and are so puffed up with "knowledge" that they become irreverent and proud; that they can no longer discern or stand for what is true. I've seen this over and over. People who study and get lost in the study using only their carnal minds; ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They cannot discern the clean from the unclean. Rather than gathering in the unity of the Son, they brazenly question and speak blasphemously of the Son and His servants. Like the Adversary, they conjure ideas and suggestions that cause many to consider blasphemies that never before came to their minds. These proud would-be teachers of truth are *easily angered or insulted*. Be aware, those who are Elohim's are full of love and so are not easily provoked; read 1 Corinthians 13. They boast of being anointed but are Scripturally faithless and unfaithful to the Magnificent Master Yeshua. Often, they're bent on emphasizing *one* or a *few* of the Scriptural facts *rather* than "*every word that proceeds from the mouth of Elohim*" (Matthew 4:4). They often focus and promote "*their version*" of some truth such as love, Torah observance, unity, marriage, or some other Scriptural fact that tugs at the heart and minds of individuals. How many times have you heard something like "my version is the correct one?" *How do they get their versions?* Often, through a *mixture of facts, fiction, clean and unclean*; topped with tons of *skepticism*. One person I use to associate with back who called

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

himself an “evangelist” told me he *interviewed* a *voodoo priest* to get some *facts* to use as *proof* for one of his *teachings*. Imagine that, a person claiming to be an evangelist of Elohim getting his facts from sources forbidden by the Elohim he claimed to serve. When I reminded him of that fact, he brushed me aside as being narrow minded. I ended my association with him as he should have known better and especially after he promoted himself to “bishop” of Elohim. He was one of those who boasted of his many years of study; truly sad. Others *indiscriminately* formulate conclusions from authors and sources that are obviously against Elohim and the Master Yeshua. Then with *jokes* and or *stern* faces, they present their unclean mixture as truth; often to the *vulnerable, disillusioned* or those *hurting*. Is this how the Eternal and His Son taught us to find and know truth? Absolutely not.

Another common characteristic of these people is that they will dismiss or speak against Scriptural texts or writers just because they disagree with the texts or the writers’ perspective; especially that of the Apostle *Paul*. Considering that Paul’s *teachings* are *reflective* of the *higher* or *Spiritual* sense of the *Law* and *Prophets*, it’s perplexing that anyone would speak against Him. They fail to believe *Peter’s* own *testimony* on behalf of Paul, “*Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation - as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures*” (2Peter 3:14-16). The Apostle Peter called Paul a beloved brother, yet these despised Peter’s view as well as a Psalmist’s warning “*You give your mouth to evil, And your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother; You slander your own mother’s son. These things you have done, and I kept silent; You thought that I was altogether like you; But I will rebuke you, and set them in order before your eyes*” (Psalms 50:19-21). Although Paul was regarded as beloved brother who did good, risking his

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

life so many could know the truth of the Gospel, these teachers rather *slander Paul* or cast doubt on Paul's writing without any solid evidence. This is unjust – evil. They would do well to heed another warning from the Proverbs, “*Whoever rewards evil for good, Evil will not depart from his house*” (Proverbs 17:13). Yet, many of them by their much learning are too puffed up to think this proverb applies to them.

Sadly, these types of teachers often boast of their *many years of study*, their *degrees* or some other carnal achievement as *credential as the reason to listen to them*. Don't be charmed or deceived, by those who spent years of learning by their flawed carnal minds or human institutions. Those who know the truth know it only because they were graced by Elohim; to learn from the Holy Spirit, or from His prophets, or from the *speech* uttered *day by day*, and from the *knowledge* revealed *night after night* described in *Psalms 19:2*. Consider that the Master “*Yeshua rejoiced in the Spirit and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight”* (Luke 10:21). Also, Paul explained, “*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called*” (1 Corinthians 1:26). Clearly, those who gain knowledge by mere human efforts or means are not trustworthy. They will often tell you something to the effect of “we write but *use our erasers*; meaning they know they're flawed with mistakes. However, the truth that comes from above is perfect. As the Elder Jacob (James) taught, “*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy*” (James 3:17). *Consider carefully*, whether the teachings you subscribe to are; first pure and are full of mercy and good fruits, or do they have errors, change, and are slanderous. Remember and *hold fast* to what *the Master said*, “*Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit*” (Matthew 12:33). Do not uphold slanderers of the doers of good.

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

As admonished by the Apostle Peter, those who speak against Paul tend to have issues and so seek to discredit him or other Scriptures which expose their negative propensities; rather than repent of it. **Beware** of these dreamers; they know and speak *a lot of facts* but *pollute* it with *confusion* and *falsehood*. Like Simon Magnus the magician, they're desirous of studying spiritual gifts and miracles; a clear evidence of their lack of the Holy Spirit. Some do this for money or pride, others for some emotional gratification, or just to draw others into their paradigm rather than honor Elohim. If you know any such teachers, don't be charmed or deceived; but *pray for them* even as *Peter prayed for Simon*. Perhaps they may *regain* their *senses* to perceive how *they are insulting* the Elohim, His Son, and His servants. Hopefully, they will become true servants who *"have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of Elohim deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of Elohim"* (2Corinthians 4:2).

4. Elohim's Directives to His Congregation Concerning Ministers

Elohim through Messiah and Spirit requires that His Called-Out ones ... Here are what we are required to do.

1. **Understand**, believe and accept only Elohim's description and qualification of His ministers as found in the holy Scriptures.
2. **Acknowledge** and confess our misunderstanding, failure, and error in this matter. *"Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of Elohim that it was an error. Why should Elohim be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?"* (Ecclesiastes 5:6). Paul describes the false ones. *"...having a **form** of godliness but **denying its power**. And **from such people turn away**"* (2Timothy 3:5). *"For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine**, but according to their **own desires**, because they have itching ears, **they will heap up for themselves teachers**; and they will*

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

turn **their** ears **away from the truth**, and be turned aside **to fables**” (2Timothy 4:3-4).

3. “**Test the spirits**” absolutely prove the divine love and power of the Holy Spirit are active.
4. **Accept** as ministerial candidates only those who meet all the criteria set by Elohim. “*For our gospel did **not** come to you in **word only**, but **also in power**, and **in the Holy Spirit** and in **much assurance**, as you **know what kind of men** we were among you for your sake* (1Thessalonians 1:5). These are **in addition** to the characteristics listed in **1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1-9**. Again, a true leading minister must have power in the Holy Spirit and have much assurance. This is what we must expect and accept from a true minister; not only words, inability and uncertainty.
5. **Pray** and wait for Elohim to reveal and or appoint true ministers in your congregation. “*Then the **Eternal** came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and **took of the Spirit** that was upon him, and **placed the same upon the seventy elders**; and it happened, when the **Spirit rested upon them**, that **they prophesied**, although they never did so again*” (Numbers 11:25). Notice the great care the Apostles took to eliminate human decision and to ensure it was the Eternal’s in selecting a replacement for the Judas the betrayer. “*And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And **they prayed** and said, “You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And **they cast their lots**, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles*” (Acts 1:23-26). They chose **two** of the **best** among them, then **prayed**, then **cast lots** trusting **in** the **Eternal** to **show** by lot **His choice**. A leader should **never** be **selected** by **human** decision or **vote**. How long will we be subjected to fallible opinions of votes? Per the Scriptures, we ought to consider two of the best, pray to the Eternal to choose for us, and cast lots to determine His decision. By His mercies, the Eternal will ensure the right person is selected if we trust Him to reveal it by the sacred lot. As it is written, “*The **lot is cast into the lap**, but **its***

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

every decision is from the Eternal” (Proverb 16:33). The Eternal’s priests were to serve by lot, “*according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Eternal*” (Luke 1:9). He gave us a sure way to know His choice; see Leviticus 16:8-10; Numbers 25:55-56; Numbers 33:54.

Importantly, if we don’t yet have a divinely ordained elder of pastor with the power of the Holy Spirit, we need to recognize each other as brethren in Messiah and come together in the bond of love to serve Him and each other without making any false claims about the Holy Spirit in us. As we do this, by the mercies of Elohim, His Spirit will be with us and eventually will dwell in us. As it is written, “*Then those who feared the Eternal spoke to one another, And the Eternal listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Eternal And who meditate on His Name*” (Malachi 3:16). The apostles taught “*But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of Elohim and the name of Yeshua Messiah, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of Elohim, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Yeshua. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 8:12-17). Long before, Yeshua taught saying, “*the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you*” (John 14:17). So, as testified by the prophets and set by the Master Yeshua, baptized believers don’t automatically receive the Holy Spirit. When that is the case, we need to wait in faith, obedience, and prayer for the Spirit to come and dwell in us. Not, make pretentious pitiful claims as many do. We need to be honest people speaking only the truth in all

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

things and wait on Him to fulfil His faithful promise to us. As we do, He will send His Holy Spirit to dwell in us and raise true ministers from among us or send them to us. Be patient in the Eternal.

6. **Support** and work with only true elders/pastors to do the work by the demonstrated power of the Spirit – not mere words or human efforts. The Master said, “*you shall know them by their works*” not by their titles and words. Likewise, Paul wrote “*And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves*” (1Thesalonians 5:12-13). Paul clarified the **works** in stating, “*For the kingdom of Elohim is not in word but in power*” (1Corinthians 4:20).
7. When necessary, expose false ministers who refuse to adhere to Elohim’s directives. Paul stated “*But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast*” (2Corinthians 11:12). Paul instructs us “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them*” (Ephesians 5:11). This discourages the deceivers while sparing the righteous from pitfalls.

Conclusion

Yeshua established His Congregation and appointed people who truly repented of their sins to receive Divine faith, love, and power by His Holy Spirit to serve as ministers whose work will help prepare the world to become the Kingdom of Elohim. However, the world is plagued with dishonest people masquerading as ministers who are hindering the faith of many and causing the world to blaspheme. Yet, those of us who are sincerely seeking to serve Elohim under the leadership of truly Divinely appointed ministers need not be deceived or succumb to the whim of false ministers. Elohim through His Apostles and prophets as set by His Uniquely Born Son Yeshua the Messiah has given us two practical and reliable ways of recognizing who His true ministers are as found in the Scriptures. The **first way** is to verify

Discerning True Elders and Pastors of Elohim

that the person *has devoted steadfast love* for Elohim and His Son by *evidence of a consistent holy virtuous* lifestyle. *Secondly*, the person must have *evidence* of one or more *Divine gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Without any disputation, *these are the two major proofs* which true elders and pastors of Elohim must have. *False ministers boast* of being Spirit filled and *divinely appointed* but *do not have* the necessary *virtuous lifestyle* and the *power* of the *Holy Spirit*. True *Divinely appointed* ministers are *few* and *hard to find*. We need to pray to Elohim to send us true ministers or make of us His true ministers. Yet, we must be careful *never* to *accept* as ministers those who prove to be *false ministers*. Remember not to be deceived by their vast knowledge that puffs them up. Rather, as did all His faithful people of old, *prayerfully ask* Elohim to provide and *look for His signs*. People who are honestly and sincerely seeking to serve Elohim, His Son and His people, but do not yet have the evident power of the Holy Spirit, must seriously seek for it in earnest prayer. Elohim in due time will provide or raise among you true ministers full of His divine love and virtuous power by His Holy Spirit to do the work and feed His flock.

By Jackson Souffrant