

A Study About Elders

(Part 16)

I. Introduction:

A. As a punishment to the children of Israel, God placed immature princes over them as their rulers (**Isaiah 3:1-5**).

1. That was not a good thing (**Ecclesiastes 10:16**).
2. It led them to error (**Isaiah 3:12**).

B. In the sense of spiritual maturity, growing up involves putting away childish things (**I Corinthians 13:11**).

1. When we are talking about maturity, being referred to as a babe means one is not yet capable of learning aright (**I Corinthians 3:1-2**) let alone leading.
2. We are not to continue in this state (**I Corinthians 14:20**).

II. Body: Not A Novice (**I Timothy 3:6**).

A. The Greek term used here is defined as: “newly planted, i.e. (figuratively) a young convert - novice” (Strong’s # 3504).

1. The term appears only in this one passage in the New Testament.
2. The difference between spiritual maturity and immaturity is however taught elsewhere (**Ephesians 4:11-14**). **This context is about spiritual gifts.*

B. Thinking about what it means not to be a babe in Christ (**Hebrews 5:12-14**).

1. Off of the milk and beyond things that stand in the way of spiritual growth (**I Peter 2:1-2** and **II Peter 1:3-10**).
2. Not unskilful in the word (**Nehemiah 8:8**, **II Timothy 2:14-18**, **II Peter 2:12**, and **II Peter 3:15-18**).
3. Of full age means: “complete (in various applications of labor, growth, mental and moral character, etc.); completeness: — of full age, man, perfect” (Strong’s # 5046). Note some usages of this in the New Testament: **Matthew 5:48**, **Matthew 19:21**, **I Corinthians 2:6**, **I Corinthians 13:10**, **Philippians 3:15**, **Colossians 1:28**, **Colossians 4:12**, and **James 3:2**
4. Experienced in discerning good from evil (**Proverbs 1:5**, **Luke 12:54-57**, **I Thessalonians 5:21**, and **I John 4:1**).
5. Not stuck in first principles (**Hebrews 6:1-2**).

C. Lest being lifted up with pride (**Obadiah 1:1-4**).

1. We should all realize the danger of pride (**Proverbs 16:5**, **Proverbs 18:12**, and **I Peter 5:5-6**).
2. Proud individuals cause problems (**Proverbs 28:25**).
3. Thinking of a way a skilled man in the word could be, knowledge could be what puffs him up (**I Corinthians 8:1**).

D. Pride will bring about his fall into the condemnation of the devil (**Proverbs 16:18-19**).

1. The condemnation of the devil (**Matthew 25:41** and **Revelation 20:10**).
2. Therefore, if a man was to be appointed to be an overseer in the body of Christ and he was not spiritually mature and humble enough for the task, he would be set up to fall away and be eternally lost. Woe to the evangelist and congregation that allows that to happen (**Romans 14:13**)!

III. Conclusion: This lesson should be obvious, for we are talking about elders (**Acts 14:23**) which infers in itself an age of maturity. Yet, such maturity is not natural with age (**Job 32:9**)? Therefore, remember that “not a novice” is about spiritual maturity.