

The Local Church Is the Column & Foundation of Truth in Opposition to the Temple of Artemis: Christ, Doctrine, & Humility Overwhelm the Lie

5. The church is further identified by Paul as the pillar of truth. The Greek word translated “pillar” is **στῦλος, stulos**.
6. The best translation is “column,” the basic system in the ancient world of supporting a building. A column’s stability is dependent upon the integrity of the foundation upon which it rests, a stability upon which the roof is dependent.
7. The next word is the translation of the Greek noun **ἑδραῖωμα, hedraiōma** which here means “foundation.”
8. In secular Greek, this word referred to that which is fixed, steadfast, or immovable. This concept was also understood by the Old Testament writers:

ἑδραῖωμα [hedraiōma]. The Old Testament's concern is with historical persistence. That which is steadfast is what endures in every change and contradiction. But where in the whole world is there anything that can be called steadfast, that has the guarantee of permanence by nature? There is only One who stands fast, namely, He who is in heaven. If anything stands fast on earth, it must be established by God, owing its steadfastness, its permanence, its ability to withstand assault, solely to Him. (p. 363)

The power and faithfulness of God are expressed in the steadfastness of our faith. In 1 Timothy 3:15 the ἐκκλησία, [ekklēsia] is called στῦλος καὶ ἑδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, [stulos kai hedraiōma tēs alētheias: the column and foundation of the truth]. A Church is established which protects and defends the truth against the confusion of myths. It gives the faith and thinking of individuals a sure ground in confession. No longer God alone, but also the Church of God, now guarantees the permanence of the ἀλήθεια [alētheia: the truth].¹ (p. 364)

9. Timothy is very familiar with columns that hold up a building in Ephesus, the famed temple of Artemis, where inside stands the grotesque idol of the Greek goddess fashioned from inanimate stone.
10. The temple’s foundation is quite visible, but it is purposely placed on sinking sand and its columns support a roof that protects its revered “inhabitant” from the elements.
11. Timothy, on the other hand, is the shepherd of a flock that meets in the church of the living God, the local church of Ephesus.
12. The flock that meets there is part of the universal church, the body of believers that began at Pentecost and continues in its construction all the way to the Rapture of the church.

¹ Ethelbert Stauffer, “ἑδραῖωμα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 2:363-64.

13. The foundation of a local church is the living God: Jesus Christ who is the Rock and none of the elements can bring down a structure built upon Him and His gospel.
14. Upon this foundation—upon this Rock—is constructed a building which must have supportive elements attached to the foundation in order for its superstructure to be stable.
15. The support of the edifice is made up of colonnades, each column representing a doctrine that, together with others, leads to the application of doctrine to life and circumstances.
16. Consistent reliance upon doctrines from the Word of God provides support for the believer's advance to the sophisticated spiritual life.
17. But even for those who function in the adult spiritual life there are always circumstances, difficulties, and allurements that challenge the believer to opt for human viewpoint solutions and choose wheel-tracks of wickedness.
18. A common problem that the advanced believer has to deal with is arrogance. Potential frustration with the world's vacuous thought can cause the believer to become bitter, enter into crusader arrogance, or take a high-and-mighty attitude toward human-viewpoint solutions and those who hold them.
19. What makes doctrine work under the pressures of prosperity or adversity is humility:
 - Proverbs 15:33** - The fear of the Lord is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.
 - Proverbs 22:4** - The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honor, and life.
 - Proverbs 29:23** - A man's arrogance will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.
 - Matthew 23:12** - "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."
 - James 4:6b** - "God is opposed to the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble."
 - v. 10** - Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.
 - 1 Peter 5:5b** - Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the arrogant; but gives grace to the humble.
20. Therefore we discover that the entablature of the local church is a threefold expression of genuine humility: (1) its architrave is spiritual-self esteem, (2) its frieze is spiritual autonomy, and (3) its cornice is spiritual maturity.
21. What supports this entablature are colonnades of Bible doctrine that provide stability for execution of the sophisticated spiritual life.
22. The stability of the colonnades is provided by the secure foundation of the Rock, Jesus Christ.

23. When the local church is populated by a maximum number of believers who are depicted by this spiritual building, then great production is accomplished.