SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Twenty, Verses 1–38

The Whole Purpose of God — a long sermon and a young man raised at Troas, and a pastor's farewell to the elders of Ephesus on the beach at Miletus

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

Paul leaves riot-torn Ephesus, strengthens the churches of Macedonia and Greece, preaches till midnight at Troas where a fallen young man is raised, and then calls the Ephesian elders to Miletus for the only speech of Paul in Acts spoken to Christian leaders — a farewell charge to guard the flock that God purchased with His own blood. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 20:1–38

Troas · ministry · course · flock · farewell

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

Contents

Five movements from the end of the riot to tears on the shore at Miletus

—	**How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors*	3
—	**Before the Passage** · *from the theater at Ephesus to the road toward Jerusalem*	3
I	**His Life Is in Him** · *Acts 20:1–12 · Troas and Eutychus*	5
II	**You Yourselves Know** · *Acts 20:13–21 · the ministry looked back on*	7
III	**That I May Finish My Course** · *Acts 20:22–24 · finishing the course*	9
IV	**Be on Guard for the Flock** · *Acts 20:25–31 · the charge to the elders*	10
V	**More Blessed to Give** · *Acts 20:32–38 · the commendation and parting*	12
VI	**The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references*	13
†	**At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side*	15
†	**Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion*	15
†	**Sources** · *where each voice comes from*	17



"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God." — Acts 20:24

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 20:1–38

The Whole Purpose of God — Paul finishes his course in Asia — a sleeper raised, and shepherds charged to guard a flock bought with blood

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 20 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 20:28

"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."

† Before the Passage

Acts 19 ended with a town clerk dismissing the assembly in the theater. Acts 20 opens "after the uproar had ceased" (v. 1). Paul had already "purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia" (19:21), and now he does it. His letters fill in what Luke passes over quickly: a hard season in Asia ("we despaired even of life," 2 Corinthians 1:8), the writing of 2 Corinthians from Macedonia and of Romans during the three months in Greece, and the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1–3).

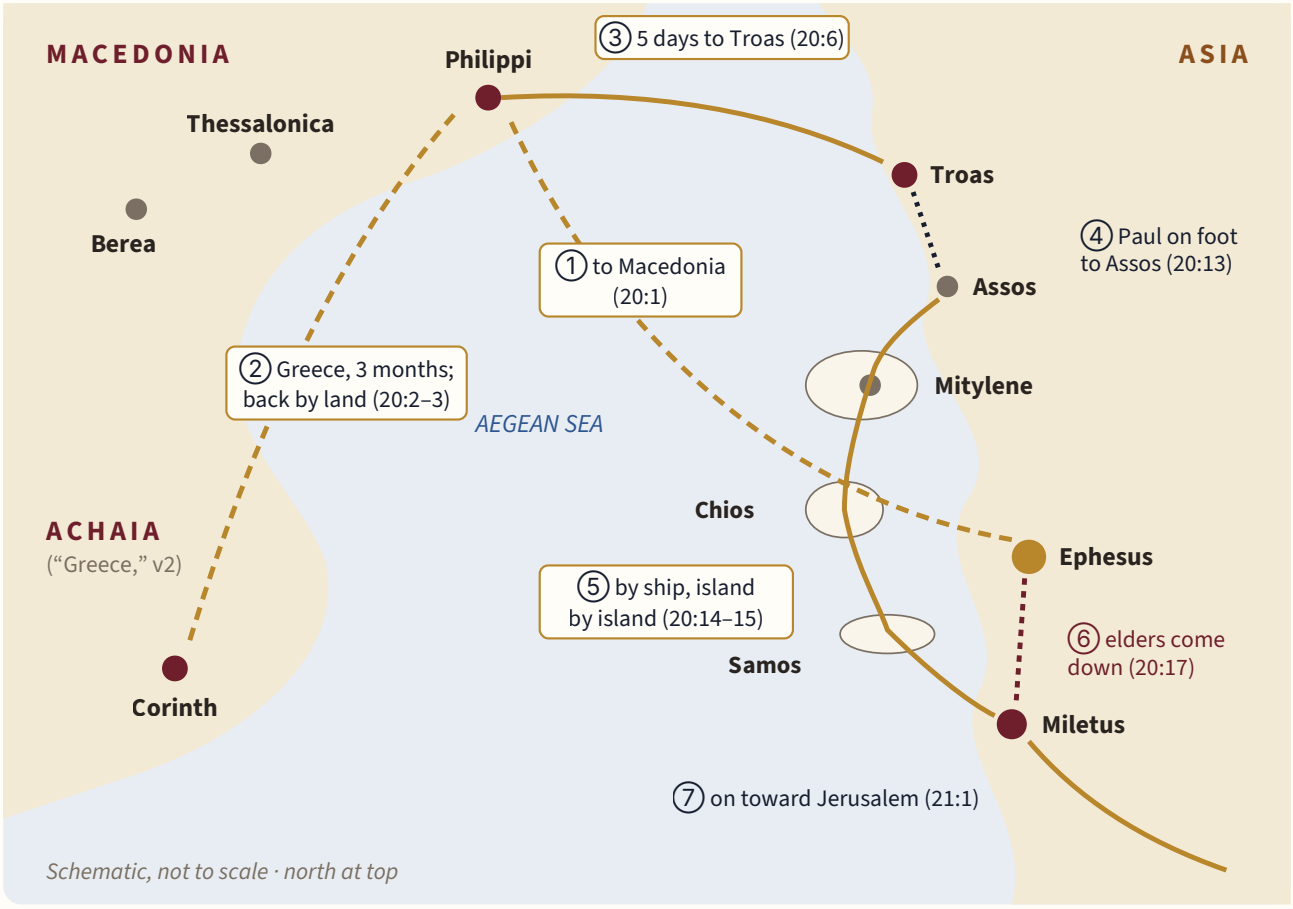
The men listed in verse 4 come from the churches Paul had planted — Berea, Thessalonica, Derbe, Asia. Guzik, following Longenecker, sees them as delegates carrying that gift: "Paul viewed it as a symbol of unity that would help his Gentile converts realize their debt." In verse 5 the "we" returns: Luke has rejoined Paul at

Philippi, and from here to Jerusalem we read an eyewitness travel log — days, ports and islands counted out carefully.

The chapter has two scenes. At Troas, on "the first day of the week," the church gathers "to break bread," Paul preaches until midnight, and a young man named Eutychus falls from a third-floor window and is picked up dead (vv. 7–12). At Miletus, about thirty miles south of Ephesus, Paul calls the elders of the Ephesian church and gives the only speech of Paul in Acts addressed to Christians — to their leaders (vv. 17–35). It is the nearest thing in Acts to Paul's pastoral letters, and it reads like them.

Paul is in a hurry — "to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost" (v. 16) — and he knows what is waiting: "bonds and afflictions" (v. 23). The speech looks back over three years of ministry, looks ahead to suffering, and hands the church over "to God and to the word of His grace" (v. 32). It ends with a saying of Jesus found nowhere in the Gospels: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v. 35).

FIGURE · PAUL'S ROUTE, ACTS 20



Follow the numbers: from Ephesus to Macedonia and Greece, back by land, across to Troas, then island by island down the coast to Miletus, where the Ephesian elders come to meet him.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 20:1–12

His Life Is in Him

Through Macedonia and Greece to Troas, a midnight sermon, and Eutychus raised

[1] *After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.* [2] *When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.* [3] *And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.* [4] *And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.* [5] *But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.* [6] *We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.* [7] *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.* [8] *There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.* [9] *And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.* [10] *But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."* [11] *When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.* [12] *They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.*

ACTS 20:1–12

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come."

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1–2

"And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm."

2 KINGS 4:34

μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων

MIA TŌN SABBATŌN · "THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK" · G1520, G4521

Literally "on day one of the sabbaths" — the Jewish way of naming the day after the Sabbath. It is the phrase the Gospels use for the morning of the resurrection, and Paul uses it for the weekly gift in Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:2). Guzik's commentary calls Troas "the first certain example we have of Christians making a practice to gather together on the first day of the week." The church met on the day the Lord rose, and the purpose is stated: "to break bread."

κλάσαι ἄρτον

KLASAI ARTON · "TO BREAK BREAD" · G2806, G740

Klaō is used in the New Testament only of breaking bread — Jesus at the feeding miracles and the Last Supper ("He broke it," Luke 22:19), and the church in Acts (2:46; 20:7, 11). In verse 7 it names the reason they gathered; in verse 11, after Eutychus is raised, Paul "had broken the bread and eaten." Most teachers read it here as the Lord's Supper, eaten with a meal, though Luke does not spell that out.

Εὔτυχος

EUTYCHOS · "EUTYCHUS" · G2161

A common name meaning "fortunate" or "lucky." He sat in the "window" (*thyris*, G2376), fell three floors, and was "picked up dead" — Luke the physician does not say "as if dead." Paul "fell upon him" and embraced him (*symperilambanō*, G4843, to throw one's arms around), as Elijah and Elisha stretched themselves on dead boys (1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34). Then he went back upstairs and kept teaching till dawn. The "lucky" young man owed his life to the Lord.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Paul revisited the churches of Macedonia and Greece and changed his route when the Jews plotted against him, and that the men with him represented the Gentile churches carrying the Jerusalem collection — with Longenecker, "Paul viewed it as a symbol of unity that would help his Gentile converts realize their debt." At Troas the church met on Sunday, "the first certain example we have of Christians making a practice to gather together on the first day of the week." He is honest about the scene: "His fall and death certainly would have put a sour note on the meeting." Paul embraced him, and the young man was restored.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul preached verses 1–12 as "The Ministry of Troas" (20 Feb 2005). Ligonier's page gives only a description, not a transcript: on one of his journeys "the Apostle Paul preached at the church in Troas," a young man named Eutychus "fell asleep, tumbled from the window, and died" during the long sermon, and Paul revived him. From that scene Sproul presses a simple point — that Christians should "remain alert and engaged with God's Word, no matter the circumstance."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes that Luke's mention of the days of Unleavened Bread is a time-marker — they "are mentioned only to describe the time." At Troas he sees a church at worship on the Lord's day, and the presence of a young man prompts counsel: "Parents should bring their children to hear sermons as soon as they can hear with understanding." The fall is a warning for drowsy hearers — "Let the punishment of Eutychus strike an awe upon us" — and the raising a comfort: when they brought him alive, "they were not a little comforted."

II
MOVEMENT

ACTS 20:13–21

You Yourselves Know

Island by island to Miletus, and Paul's account of three years among them

13 *But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had*
arranged it, intending himself to go by land. 14 *And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to*
Mitylene. 15 *Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to*
Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus. 16 *For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would*
not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.
17 *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church.* 18 *And when they had come to him,*
he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole
time, 19 *serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the*
plots of the Jews; 20 *how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you*
publicly and from house to house, 21 *solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God*
and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

ACTS 20:13–21

FIGURE · THE FAREWELL AT MILETUS

PAUL'S FAREWELL AT MILETUS · ACTS 20:18–35 IN FOUR PARTS

LOOKING BACK vv18–21	LOOKING AHEAD vv22–27	THE CHARGE vv28–31	THE COMMENDATION vv32–35
"how I was with you"	bound by the Spirit	be on guard	to God and the word
humility, tears, trials	bonds await me	shepherd the church	of His grace
nothing held back	finish my course	bought with blood	no one's silver
public, house to house	innocent of blood	wolves from outside,	these hands worked
repentance and faith	the whole purpose	men from inside	more blessed to give

THE SAME VOICE AS THE PASTORAL LETTERS

"I have finished the course" (2 Tim 4:7) · "shepherd the flock of God among you" (1 Pet 5:2)

He opens and closes with "You yourselves know" (vv18, 34).

Read the four panels left to right — Paul's past, his future, his charge to the elders and his commendation of them to God.

ταπεινοφροσύνη

TAPEINOPHROSYNĒ · "HUMILITY" · G5012

Lowliness of mind — thinking of yourself rightly, low before God and others. Paul uses it in Philippians 2:3, "with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." In verse 19 humility comes first in a list with "tears" and "trials": the apostle served "the Lord" — not the elders, not his reputation — and it cost him. It is the mind of Christ, who "humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death" (Philippians 2:8).

ὑπεστειλάμην

HYPESTEILAMĒN · "I DID NOT SHRINK FROM" · G5288

Hypostellō means to draw back, to hold something in reserve. Paul uses it twice in this speech: "I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable" (v. 20) and "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (v. 27). The danger for any teacher is not lying but leaving out — keeping back the hard parts. The KJV catches it with "kept back nothing."

διαμαρτύρομαι

DIAMARTYROMAI · "SOLEMNLY TESTIFY" · G1263

A strengthened form of "testify" — to bear witness earnestly, as before a judge. It runs through the speech: Paul solemnly testified to Jews and Greeks (v. 21); the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to him of chains (v. 23); his ministry is "to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God" (v. 24). The content of his witness in verse 21 is the whole gospel in two words: repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik follows Bruce on the voyage: Paul chose to sail past Ephesus so as not to lose time in Asia, hurrying for Pentecost, and summoned the elders to Miletus instead. In verses 18–21 Paul reminds them how he lived among them — humbly, with tears and trials, holding nothing back. Guzik, with Bruce, takes "from house to house" as a picture of how the church met: "This implies that the Ephesian church, lacking any central building, was organized logically in house-churches." Public teaching and home visits went together, and the message to Jew and Greek alike was repentance and faith.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry follows Paul on foot to Assos while his companions sailed, and notes how he hurried to reach Jerusalem for Pentecost. In the speech Henry hears Paul appeal to what the elders had seen, as a model for their own work. He served "with all humility of mind," he "served the Lord with many tears," and he was "a painstaking preacher," teaching in public and in homes. His doctrine, to Jews and Greeks alike, was repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 20:22–24

That I May Finish My Course

Bound by the Spirit for Jerusalem, and a life not counted dear

22 *"And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there,* 23 *except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me.* 24 *"But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*

ACTS 20:22–24

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"

2 TIMOTHY 4:7

"Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

PHILIPPIANS 3:13–14

δεδεμένος

DEDEMENOS · "BOUND" · G1210

The perfect participle of *deō*, to bind or tie: Paul is already "bound" by the Spirit before he is bound by men. The same verb will soon describe real chains — Agabus binds his own feet and hands with Paul's belt (21:11), and Paul says he is "ready not only to be bound, but even to die" (21:13). The Spirit does not hide the cost: "bonds and afflictions await me" (v. 23).

δρόμος

DROMOS · "COURSE" · G1408

A race course or the race itself, from *dramein*, to run. Paul uses it at the end of his life: "I have finished the course" (2 Timothy 4:7). In verse 24 his aim is not to live long but to finish well. Guzik: "Paul thought of himself as a runner who had a race to finish." The course was "the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus" — assigned, not chosen — and its finish line was testimony to "the gospel of the grace of God."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Paul went to Jerusalem knowing trouble waited, and was not moved by it. He valued his life only as it served his calling: "Paul thought of himself as a runner who had a race to finish." The Spirit had warned him city after city, and Paul did not take the warnings as a reason to stop. Guzik brings in Spurgeon on a "gospel worth dying for" — the gospel of the grace of God was the one thing Paul would not trade for safety.

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "A Gospel Worth Dying For" takes verse 24 as its text. Paul valued his life but treated it as a race, every stride aimed at testifying to God's grace. Not every message called "gospel" is worth that: "The gospel is the good news of grace." It offers pardon to the guilty — "God asks of you no good works, nor good feelings, but that you be willing to accept what He most freely gives." It must be told: "Wherever Paul went he published the gospel." And it gives God all the credit: "It makes man nobody, but God is all-in-all."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry hears Paul's courage in the old words, "None of these things move me." He knew bonds awaited in every city, yet he would "finish his course with joy." Henry reads Paul as counting his life secondary to finishing his calling — "Neither count I my life dear to myself," so long as he could finish the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 20:25–31

Be on Guard for the Flock

Innocent of their blood, the whole purpose of God, and wolves at the door

25 *"And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer*
see my face. 26 *"Therefore, I testify to you this day that* ⚠ *I am innocent of the blood of all men.* 27 *"For I did not*
shrink from declaring to you △ *the whole purpose of God.* 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.*

ACTS 20:25–31

"But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand."

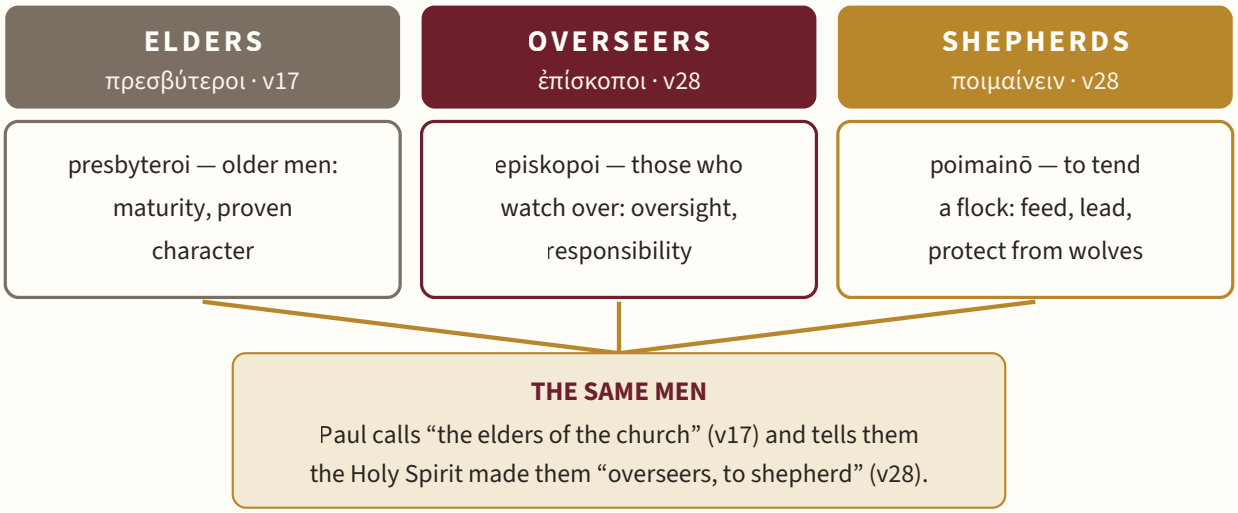
EZEKIEL 33:6

"shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock."

1 PETER 5:2–3

FIGURE · ELDERS, OVERSEERS, SHEPHERDS

ONE GROUP OF MEN, THREE WORDS · ACTS 20:17, 28



Notice that the men Paul calls "elders" in verse 17 are the same men he calls "overseers" and tells to "shepherd" in verse 28.

βουλή

BOULĒ · "PURPOSE, COUNSEL" · G1012

A deliberate plan or resolve — the biblehub interlinear glosses it "resolved plan." Luke uses it for God's "predetermined plan" in Peter's Pentecost sermon (2:23). "The whole purpose of God" (KJV "all the counsel of God") is not every fact in the Bible but God's whole saving plan, unedited — sin and grace, judgment and mercy, doctrine and duty. Because Paul had declared all of it, he could say "I am innocent of the blood of all men" (v. 26), the language of Ezekiel's watchman.

ἐπισκόπους … ποιμαίνειν

EPISKOPOUS … POIMAINEIN · "OVERSEERS … TO SHEPHERD" · G1985, G4165

Paul called "the elders" (*presbyterous*, G4245) in verse 17; in verse 28 he says the Holy Spirit made them "overseers" (*episkopous*, from which "bishop") to "shepherd" (*poimainein*). Three words, one group of men. The flock (*poimnion*, G4168) is not theirs: it is "the church of God which He purchased (*periepoiēsato*, G4046 — acquired for Himself) with His own blood." The interlinear text reads *tou theou*, "of God"; some manuscripts read "of the Lord," and some scholars render the end "with the blood of His own [Son]." Either way, the price of the church was the blood of Christ.

λύκοι βαρεῖς

LYKOI BAREIS · "SAVAGE WOLVES" · G3074, G926

Barys is "heavy" — grievous, fierce, hard to bear. Jesus warned of false prophets who are "ravenous wolves" in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15), and of the hired hand who "sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep" (John 10:12). Paul sees two dangers: wolves "will come in" from outside (v. 29), and men "from among your own selves" will arise (v. 30). His answer is *grēgoreite* (G1127), "be on the alert" — stay awake — the opposite of Eutychus.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Paul could leave with a clean conscience: “Paul could leave them with a clear conscience because he knew that he taught them the whole counsel of God.” Then the charge — “Pay attention to the people of God. Love them, look over them, care for them.” The flock is not the elders’ property: “the church doesn’t belong to them, it belongs to Jesus who purchased it with His own blood.” And the danger is real: “These wolves would be vicious. They wouldn’t hold back against the people of God,” coming both from outside and from inside the church.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul’s “Message to the Elders” (Acts 20:13–38, 27 Feb 2005) is likewise known only through Ligonier’s description: “As shepherds of the church of God, elders are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the sheep.” Before leaving for Jerusalem, Paul gave the Ephesian elders “detailed instructions” “on how to guard against the dangers that threaten the flock,” and Sproul walks through the farewell as a word that “still applies to church leaders today.”

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon took verses 26–27 for “The Minister’s Farewell” (11 Dec 1859), and he insists the whole counsel means all of it — God’s love and election, the person and work of Christ, the Spirit’s work, and duty too: “Holy living must be preached, as well as happy living.” “That is no gospel which has not Christ in it.” A one-sided gospel wins applause — “Espouse but one phase of the truth, and you shall be cried up to the very heavens” — but it ruins souls. The honest preacher gets personal: he “does not condemn sin in the mass; he singles out separate sins in his hearers.” And he pleads: “It is not possible for me to dwell upon doctrine without invitation.”

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads verse 27 as the reason for verse 26: Paul was pure from their blood because “He had preached to them the whole counsel of God,” and “The gospel is the counsel of God.” In verse 28 the order matters — ministers must “take heed to themselves in the first place,” then to the flock. The motive is the price: “the church which he has purchased with his own blood.” Henry names the threat plainly — false teachers “these he calls grievous wolves” — and adds the danger from within, men who would draw away disciples after themselves.

V
MOVEMENT

ACTS 20:32–38

More Blessed to Give

Commended to God and the word of His grace, working hands, and tears on the shore

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.* 33 *“I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or clothes.* 34 *“You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me.* 35 *“In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, ‘☆ It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”* 36 *When he had said these*

things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. [37] *And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,* [38] *grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.*

ACTS 20:32–38

"He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need."

EPHESIANS 4:28

παρατίθεμαι

PARATITHEMAI · "I COMMEND" · G3908

To set something beside someone for safekeeping — to deposit, to entrust. Jesus used it from the cross: "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT" (Luke 23:46). Paul and Barnabas did the same with new elders in Galatia: "they commended them to the Lord" (Acts 14:23). Paul cannot stay, so he deposits the church with God and with "the word of His grace, which is able to build you up (*oikodomēsai*, G3618) and to give you the inheritance (*klēronomia*, G2817)."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Paul entrusts the church to God and to His word, and points to his own unselfish labor as the example. "Laboring like this means that Paul was a hard worker for God's glory." Leaders should think about what they give, not what they get: "Without a heart of sacrifice there can be no real effective, eternal ministry." The parting shows the man behind the doctrine: "This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine, but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry hears hope in Paul's commendation: the word of grace that saved them "is still able to build them up" and bring them to the inheritance. Paul's own life backs up his words — he sought no one's wealth, and "these hands of mine have ministered to my necessities." At the parting Paul kneels and prays with them all, "They all wept sorely," and Henry observes, "Those that are most loving are commonly best beloved." Their deepest grief was "that they should see his face no more."

VI THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the Good Shepherd to the Lord's word to Ephesus a generation later

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

JOHN 10:11

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves."

MATTHEW 7:15

> *"And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;"*
>
> EPHESIANS 4:11–12

> *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace"*
>
> EPHESIANS 1:7

> *"As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines,"*
>
> 1 TIMOTHY 1:3

> *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;"*
>
> 2 TIMOTHY 4:7

> *"And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."*
>
> 1 PETER 5:4

> *"But I have this against you, that you have left your first love."*
>
> REVELATION 2:4

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik reads Paul's warning as a real threat from two directions: "These wolves would be vicious. They wouldn't hold back against the people of God" — and they would rise from inside the church as well as come in from outside.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the travel log and the speech, quoting Bruce, Longenecker and Stott; Sproul (known here only through Ligonier's descriptions of two sermons) stresses alert hearers and shepherds who protect the sheep; Spurgeon preaches the gospel of grace and the whole counsel; Henry gives counsel to ministers and congregations alike. They agree that the church belongs to Christ, who bought it, and that its leaders must hold nothing back and guard it with their lives.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Troas	Delegates with the collection; the first sure Sunday gathering; a sour note turned to joy.	Stay alert and engaged with God's Word, whatever the circumstance.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Bring children to sermons; let Eutychus strike an awe on drowsy hearers.
II · You know	Sailed past Ephesus for Pentecost; house-churches; repentance and faith.	— (Sproul's sermon covers these verses; no detail sourced)	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Humility of mind, many tears, a painstaking preacher.
III · The course	A runner with a race to finish; a gospel worth dying for.	— (no separate Sproul text on these verses)	The gospel is good news of grace; it makes man nobody, God all.	None of these things move me; finish the course with joy.
IV · The flock	Love them, look over them — the church belongs to Jesus.	Elders are entrusted with protecting the sheep.	Preach the whole counsel — holy living as well as happy living.	Take heed to yourselves first; grievous wolves will come.
V · Farewell	Without a heart of sacrifice, no eternal ministry; a warm pastor.	— (no separate Sproul text on these verses)	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	The word is still able to build up; the most loving are best beloved.

ACTS 20:1–38 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **The church met on the day the Lord rose.** "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread" (v7). Guzik's commentary calls it "the first certain example" of a regular Sunday gathering. THE TEXT
- **Lucky had nothing to do with it.** *Eutychos* means "fortunate," but he was "picked up dead" (v9). Paul embraced him like Elisha (2 Kings 4:34) and said, "his life is in him." THE GREEK
- **Stay awake for the word.** Henry: "Let the punishment of Eutychus strike an awe upon us." Sproul: Christians should "remain alert and engaged with God's Word, no matter the circumstance." HENRY
- **Public and house to house.** Paul taught in the hall and in homes (v20). Guzik, with Bruce: the Ephesian church "was organized logically in house-churches." GUZIK
- **Not shrinking is the test.** *Hypostellō* twice (vv20, 27): Paul held nothing back. The danger is not error spoken but truth withheld. THE GREEK
- **Finish well, not long.** Paul does not count his life dear "so that I may finish my course" (v24). Guzik: "a runner who had a race to finish." Spurgeon: "The gospel is the good news of grace." SPURGEON
- **The whole counsel includes duty.** Spurgeon: "Holy living must be preached, as well as happy living." "That is no gospel which has not Christ in it." SPURGEON

- **Elders, overseers, shepherds — one office.** The "elders" of v17 are the "overseers" who "shepherd" in v28. Three words for the same men: maturity, oversight, care. THE TEXT
- **The flock has an Owner.** God "purchased" the church "with His own blood" (v28). Guzik: "the church doesn't belong to them, it belongs to Jesus." GUZIK
- **Giving is the Lord's own word.** "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v35) — a saying of Jesus found nowhere in the Gospels, kept for us by Paul. THE TEXT

† Questions for the Table

1 **Eutychus sat in the window and drifted off while the word was taught. Where am I sitting "in the window" — half in, half out — and what keeps me from being fully awake to God's Word?**

Remain alert and engaged with God's Word (Sproul).

20:7–12

2 **Paul says he served "with all humility and with tears." What does humble, costly service look like in my home or my group this month?**

Humility of mind, many tears (Henry).

20:18–21; Phil 2:3

3 **What would it mean for me to say, "I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself"? What am I protecting that keeps me from finishing my course?**

A runner who had a race to finish (Guzik).

20:22–24; 2 Tim 4:7

4 **Paul "did not shrink from declaring" the whole purpose of God. What part of God's Word do I tend to skip — in my own reading or when I talk with other men?**

Holy living must be preached, as well as happy living (Spurgeon).

20:20, 26–27

5 **Paul warned of wolves from outside and men from inside. How do I watch over the men God has given me without becoming suspicious or controlling?**

Take heed to yourselves in the first place (Henry).

20:28–31; 1 Pet 5:2–3

6 **"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Where is God asking me to work with my own hands so I can help the weak?**

Without a heart of sacrifice there can be no real effective, eternal ministry (Guzik).

20:33–35; Eph 4:28

Acts 20 is a pastor saying goodbye. He has held nothing back, he is ready to die, and he hands his people to God and to the word of His grace. The church is not ours — it was bought with blood — so we guard it, feed it, give to it, and finish the course He gave us with joy.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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