ACTS 20

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

> *"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."*
> ACTS 20:28

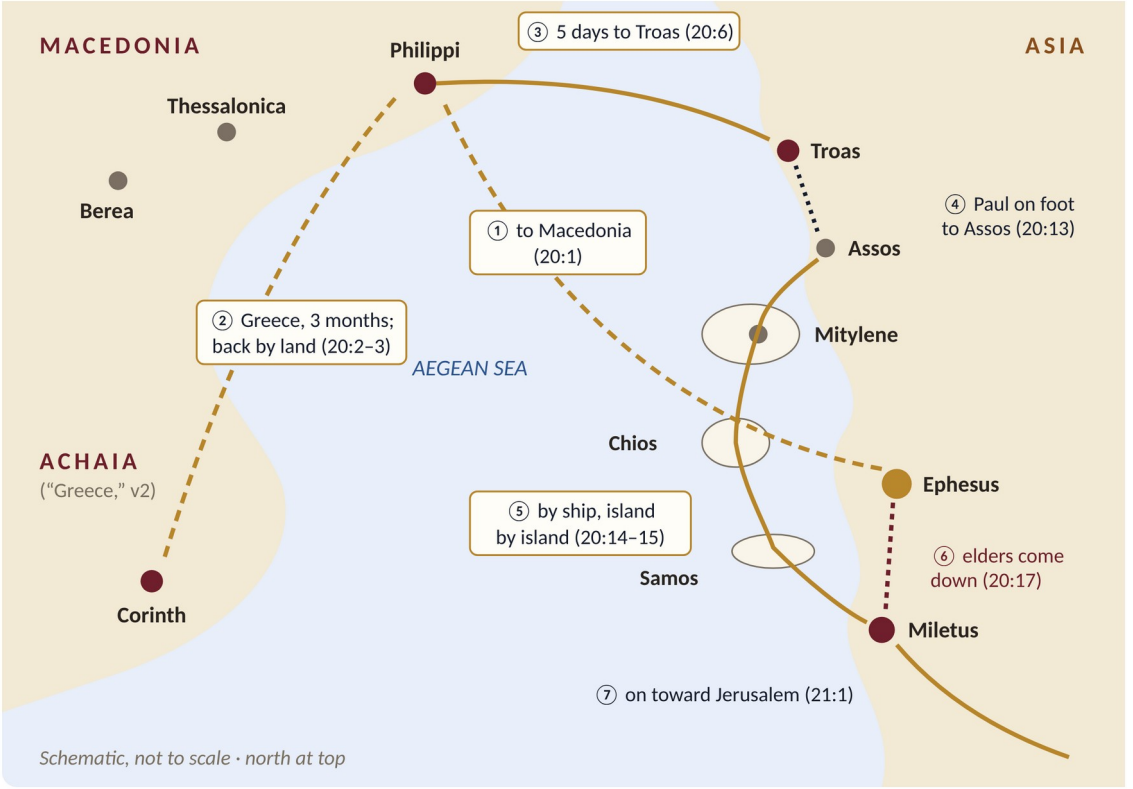
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 19 ended with a town clerk dismissing the assembly in the theater.

2. The men listed in verse 4 come from the churches Paul had planted — Berea, Thessalonica, Derbe, Asia.

3. The chapter has two scenes.



His Life Is in Him

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

ACTS 20:7

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Delegates with the collection; the first sure Sunday gathering; a sour note turned to joy.

R.C. SPROUL

Stay alert and engaged with God's Word, whatever the circumstance.

MATTHEW HENRY

Bring children to sermons; let Eutychus strike an awe on drowsy hearers.

μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων
MIA TŌN SABBATŌN · "THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK"

Literally "on day one of the sabbaths" — the Jewish way of naming the day after the Sabbath.

You Yourselves Know

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

ACTS 20:19

serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;

DAVID GUZIK

Sailed past Ephesus for Pentecost; house-churches; repentance and faith.

MATTHEW HENRY

Humility of mind, many tears, a painstaking preacher.

ταπεινοφροσύνη
TAPEINOPHROSYNĒ · "HUMILITY"

Lowliness of mind — thinking of yourself rightly, low before God and others.

The farewell at Miletus



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

That I May Finish My Course

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

ACTS 20:24

"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.

DAVID GUZIK

A runner with a race to finish; a gospel worth dying for.

C.H. SPURGEON

The gospel is good news of grace; it makes man nobody, God all.

MATTHEW HENRY

None of these things move me; finish the course with joy.

δεδεμένος

DEDEMENOS · "BOUND"

The perfect participle of deō, to bind or tie: Paul is already "bound" by the Spirit before he is bound by men.

Be on Guard for the Flock

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

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.

DAVID GUZIK

Love them, look over them — the church belongs to Jesus.

R.C. SPROUL

Elders are entrusted with protecting the sheep.

C.H. SPURGEON

Preach the whole counsel — holy living as well as happy living.

MATTHEW HENRY

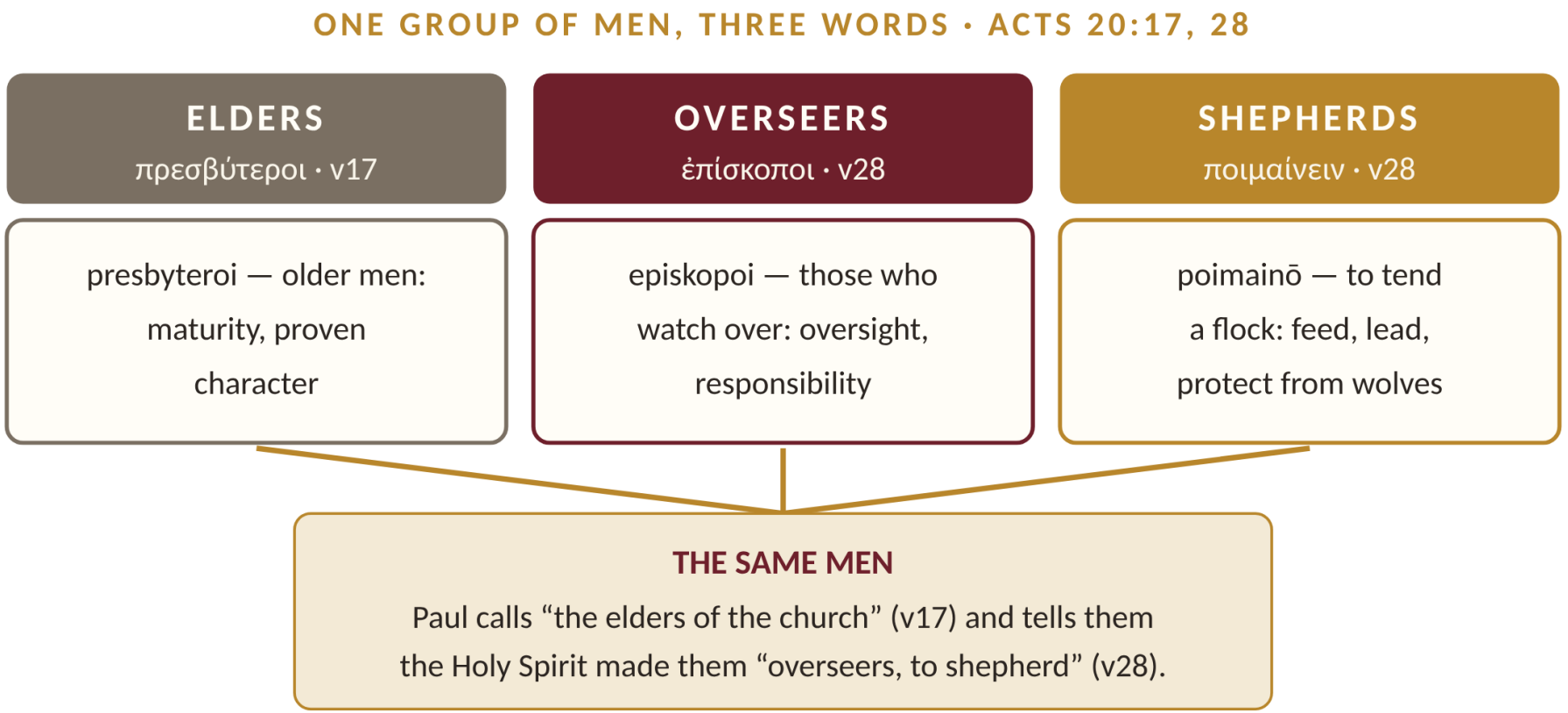
Take heed to yourselves first; grievous wolves will come.

βουλή

BOULĒ · "PURPOSE, COUNSEL"

A deliberate plan or resolve — the biblehub interlinear glosses it "resolved plan."

Elders, overseers, shepherds



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

More Blessed to Give

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

ACTS 20:32

"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.

DAVID GUZIK

Without a heart of sacrifice, no eternal ministry; a warm pastor.

MATTHEW HENRY

The word is still able to build up; the most loving are best beloved.

παρατίθεμαι
PARATITHEMAI · "I COMMEND"

To set something beside someone for safekeeping — to deposit, to entrust.

What to carry from this chapter

1

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).

2

Lucky had nothing to do with it.

Eutychos means “fortunate,” but he was “picked up dead” (v9).

3

Stay awake for the word.

Henry: “Let the punishment of Eutychus strike an awe upon us.”

4

Public and house to house.

Paul taught in the hall and in homes (v20).

More to carry

5

Not shrinking is the test.

Hypostellō twice (vv20, 27): Paul held nothing back.

6

Finish well, not long.

Paul does not count his life dear “so that I may finish my course” (v24).

7

The whole counsel includes duty.

Spurgeon: “Holy living must be preached, as well as happy living.”

8

Elders, overseers, shepherds — one office.

The “elders” of v17 are the “overseers” who “shepherd” in v28.

Talk it through

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?

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?

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?

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?

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?

CLOSING

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

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.