

Shepherding God's Flock

Text: Acts 20:28-31

Introduction:

We continue to plow through Paul's heartfelt exhortation to the Ephesian elders, as he prepares to head to Jerusalem. This morning, we will set up camp in verses 28-31.

I. Shepherding God's Flock

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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" (vs. 28).

Question #1: Why does Paul begin this charge with the word, "Therefore?" What are the implications of this?

Question #2: What two-fold critical charge does Paul give the Ephesian elders here, concerning their responsibility as elders? How are they to fulfill each part of this two-fold charge?

Question #3: Who ultimately sets the elders over the church? What are the implications of the term "overseer?" What are the implications of the term "shepherd?"

Question #4: What two sobering motivations does Paul give to compel them to faithfully shepherd the church? [God's church; purchased by His shed blood]. Are these motivations sufficient enough to compel shepherds to take their work very seriously? Explain. How does this further affirm the deity of Christ?

"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (vs. 29).

Question #5: What does the word, "For," tell us here? What major threat is Paul certain the church will face when he departs? What are the implications of the "savage wolf" analogy? In what way would these wolves seek to harm the flock/church?

"Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (vs. 30).

Question #6: What sobering truth does Paul reveal here? What do these false shepherds do? Why do they do this? Elaborate on this. Who is primarily responsible for seeking to prevent this from happening? While there is no flawless means of preventing this from happening, what measures should be taken to avoid this? How does the church as a whole get involved in this work?

"Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears" (vs. 31).

Question #7: What is the "therefore" therefore? How does the word "watch" connect to what Paul has said about his own integrity just prior to this? What else has Paul done (in addition to his own example) to help prepare the Ephesians for his departure? How does the word "warn," line up with what Paul has stated prior to this? What does all of this say about the genuineness of Paul's concern? How does this conflict with the erroneous teachings of hyper-Calvinism? Apply these things to us, here in the 21st century. [Note that Paul prepped them for three years]