

# Acts 20:28-38 Commentary

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: [prosechete](#) (2PPAM) [heautois kai panti to poimnio, en o humas to pneuma to hagion etheto](#) (3SAMI) [episkopous, poimainein](#) (PAN) [ten ekklesian tou theou, en periepoiesato](#) (3SAMI) [dia tou aimatos tou idiou.](#):"

- **Be on guard:** 2Ch 19:6,7 Mk 13:9 Luke 21:34 1Co 9:26,27 Col 4:17 1Ti 4:16 Heb 12:15
- **All the flock:** Ac 20:29 Song 1:7,8 Isa 40:11 63:11 Jer 13:17,20, 31:10 Eze 34:31 Mic 7:14 Luke 12:32 1Pe 5:2,3
- **Among which:** Ac 13:2, 14:23, 1Co 12:8-11,28-31, 1Ti 4:14
- **Overseers:** Php 1:1, 1Ti 3:2, 5:17 Tit 1:7 Heb 13:17 1Pe 2:25
- **To shepherd:** Ps 78:70-72 Pr 10:21 Isa 40:11 Jer 3:15 Eze 34:3 Mic 5:4 7:14 Zec 11:4 Mt 2:6 Jn 21:15-17 1Pe 5:2,3
- **The church:** 1Co 1:2, 10:32, 11:22 15:9 Ga 1:13 1Ti 3:5,15,16
- **Which He purchased:** Ps 74:2 Isa 53:10-12 Eph 1:7,14 Col 1:14 Heb 9:12-14 1Pe 1:18,19, 2:9 Rev 5:9)

**The International Children's** - Be careful for yourselves and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit gave you the work of caring for this flock. You must be like shepherds to the church of God. This is the church that God bought with his own death.

**Amplified** - Take care and be on guard for yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops and guardians, to shepherd (tend and feed and guide) the church of the Lord or of God which He obtained for Himself [buying it and saving it for Himself] with His own blood.

**Phillips** - Now be on your guard for yourselves and for every flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians - you are to be shepherds to the Church of God, which he won at the cost of his own blood.

**Wuest** - Be constantly maintaining a careful watch over yourselves with a view to guarding yourselves, also do the same with respect to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit appointed you as spiritual overseers, shepherding the Church of God which He bought for himself through the agency of the blood, the blood which is His own unique blood, possessed by Himself alone.

## PAUL'S FINAL CHARGE:

**"I've done all I can for you. Now it's up to you."**

**John MacArthur** summarizes Paul's last words to the Ephesian elders "to maintain five priorities: be right with God, shepherd the flock, guard the flock, study and pray, and be free from self-interest. ([MacArthur, J: Acts 1-12; Acts 13-28 Moody Press](#))

**Paul** first reminds the elders of their **DUTY** (Acts 20:28) and then of their **DANGER** (Acts 20:29ff), for as **William Barclay** rightly reminds us "The infection of the world is never far away. Where truth is, falsehood ever attacks. There was a constant warfare ahead to keep the faith intact and the Church pure."

## BE VIGILANT:

### BE RIGHT WITH GOD

**Be on guard** (beware, pay or give attention to, attend to, keep a watchful eye on) ([4337](#))(**prosecho** from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted and yet the idea of "the mind" was still implied. **Prosecho** was a naval term which meant to moor or tie up a ship. **Prosecho** was also used to mean "to remain on course".

If you are a church leader responsible for the sheep, I would strongly encourage you to perform a simple inductive study on **prosecho** -

- Mt 6:1; 7:15; 10:17; 16:6, 11, 12;
- Lk 12:1; 17:3; 20:46; 21:34;
- Acts 5:35; 8:6, 10, 11; 16:14; 20:28;
- 1 Ti 1:4; 3:8; 4:1, 13;
- Titus 1:14;
- Heb 2:1;7:13;

**A T Robertson** notes the literal sense is "hold your mind on yourselves."

Figuratively **prosecho** conveys the idea of holding one's mind before means to take heed, to pay attention, to give heed, be in a state of alert, to watch out for or to be on guard. When used in this manner **prosecho** warns of anger, usually spiritual but occasionally physical! **Prosecho** is not a call simply to notice something, but to be on guard against it because it is so harmful. The idea is to turn one's mind or attention to a thing by being on one's guard against it.

In this passage **prosecho** is in the **present imperative** which is a command to the elders at Ephesus (and by application to elders of every church - **You do have elders don't you? If not who is overseeing the sheep? Who will recognize the savage wolves?**), the watchers of the God's flock, to continually be on the look out for **savage wolves** Satan's "servants of righteousness" (2Cor 11:14, 15), who craftily seek to bring in error besides truth (2Pe 2:1-note, Jude 1:4) and thereby promote soul deceiving and deadening "doctrines" (cp 1Ti 4:1, Eph 4:14-note)

**Be on guard for yourselves** - Read this very slowly and carefully lest you miss what Paul is saying. **What is he saying? Yourself** first, then the **flock**. First, check the shepherd, then the sheep! Is he not saying in essence what Solomon charged in his proverb...

**Watch** over **your** heart with all diligence, **for** (Term of explanation - What is he explaining?) from it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23-note)

Paul is saying to the leaders that the **first order of business** is to **guard their own heart and mind** (cp (Mark 13:9; Luke 21:34), so that they might be better prepared to then guard the flock entrusted to their watchcare. There are temptations which are unique or peculiar to the position of leadership which necessitate constant personal vigilance! This begs the question dear pastor or elder, how is your personal relationship with God? Are you walking in the light? Are there secret sins about which no one knows? How's your prayer life? Are you in the Word daily (and not just for preparation of sermons or lessons, but for personal feeding, Mt 4:4)?

**Paul** gave a similar warning to **Archippus**...

And say to Archippus, **"Take heed** (blepo in the aorist imperative - a command issued with a sense of urgency; "Carry this out now and do it effectively!") to the ministry (diakonia) which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill (pleroo) it.

**Comment:** Note that just as with the Holy Spirit's selection of the overseers, the ministry Archippus had received was given to him by the Lord. Beloved, how we need to hear and heed this basic Biblical principle lest our "ministry" be in vain, veritable wood, hay and stubble! All ministry must be from Him, to Him and through Him! He Alone is the Head of the Body. He Alone is the originating and sustaining Vine (Jn 15:5). Be sure your service in His Name is indeed His service, the ministry He has graciously given you!

**Barnes** comments on attend to yourselves first...

To your own piety (godliness), opinions, and mode of life. This is the first duty of a minister; for without this all his preaching will be vain. Compare Col 4:17; 1Ti 4:14. Ministers are beset with unique dangers and temptations, and against them they should be on their guard. In addition to the temptations which they have in common with other people, they are exposed to those special to their office - arising from **flattery**, and **ambition**, and **despondency**, and **worldly-mindedness**. And just in proportion to the importance of their office is the importance of the injunction of Paul, to take heed to themselves.

**Guzik** - The godly leader knows that effective leadership flows from a life, not just knowledge.

**Brian Bell** -"Water never rises above its level" – what we are will determine our preaching, & what we do will never rise above what we are! Spiritual health today is no guarantee of spiritual health tomorrow! We need to consciously and consistently sustain the character traits that foster holiness. ([Sermon Notes](#))

**W Arnot's** summary on **Take Heed**...

The logic and the theology of the sentence are equally good. The first care of the spiritual shepherd is for himself, the next for the flock. In some parts they paint garden walls black, that they may absorb more of the sun's heat and so impart more warmth to the fruit trees that lean on them. Those who in any sphere care for souls stand in the position of the garden wall. The more that the teacher absorbs for himself of Christ's love, the more benefit will others obtain from him. It is not the wall which glitters most in the sunshine that does most for the trees that are trained against it: it is the wall which is least seen that takes in most heat for itself: and

the wall that has most heat in itself gives out most for the benefit of the trees. So it is not the preacher who flashes out into the greatest flame himself that imparts most benefit to inquirers who sit at his feet. Those who drink in most of the Master's spirit are most useful in the world. Those who first take heed to themselves will be most effective in caring for the spiritual weal of those who look up to them. (Biblical Illustrator)

In a similar warning **Paul** exhorted **Timothy** (who most commentators think was the pastor at Ephesus at the time of writing of the Pastoral Epistles) to...

**Pay close attention** ("Keep a close watch" = ESV) (**present imperative** - command calling for continual attention!) to yourself and to your teaching ("Watch your life and doctrine closely" = NIV); **persevere** ("persist" = ESV, "continue in" = NKJ) (**present imperative**) in these things; for (Term of explanation) as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. (1Ti 4:16)

**MacArthur** commenting on 2Ti 2:20-21 (note) writes that...

In a **house** there were **vessels** for dishonorable uses, such as garbage and other waste. There were also **vessels** for **honorable** uses, such as food and drink. Only clean ones of high quality were fit for honor. Since God uses clean and holy instruments, **vessels of honor**, self-examination and forsaking sin are essential for leaders. Although God does bless His truth in spite of the preacher, He does not bless the unholy leader, no matter what title, position, or office he might hold. (Ibid)

**Richard Baxter** in his excellent treatise, **The Reformed Pastor** exhorts all leaders to...

1. See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought in your own souls. **Take heed to yourselves**, lest you be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach....

**Take heed to yourselves**, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing; and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare food for them.... (See link below for lengthy discussion of this point)

**Take heed, therefore, to yourselves** first, that you be that which you persuade your hearers to be, and believe that which you persuade them to believe, and heartily entertain that Savior whom you offer to them. (Mk12:31)...

**Take heed to your own judgments and affections.** Vanity and error will slyly insinuate, and seldom come without fair presences: great distempers and apostasies have usually small beginnings. (2 Cor. 11:14) (See online book below for more discussion of preceding "take heed" points)

2. Content not yourselves with being in a state of grace, but **be also careful** that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons which you study, before you preach them to others....(See online book below for more discussion)

3. **Take heed to yourselves**, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hindrances of the success of your own labors....

Certainly, brethren, we have very great cause to **take heed what we do**, as well as what we say: if we will be the servants of Christ indeed, we must not be tongue servants only, but must serve him with our deeds, and be "doers of the work, that we may be blessed in our deed." (James 1:22,25)....(See online book below for more discussion of preceding "take heed" points)

4. **Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn.** (Ro 2:1) Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonor Him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach His laws, and willfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? if it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? if it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? if they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you "know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death;" and yet will you do them? "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" (Ro 1:32; Ro 2:17; Ro 2:21-24) What! shall the same tongue speak evil that speakest against evil? Shall those lips censure, and slander, and backbite your neighbor, that cry down these and the

like things in others?

**Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves:** 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.' **O brethren! it is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.** (Ed comment: "Amen" or "O my!")

5. Lastly, **take heed to yourselves**, that you not lack the qualifications necessary for your work. He must not be himself a babe in knowledge, that will teach men all those mysterious things which must be known for salvation. (See online book below for more discussion) ([The Reformed Pastor, Richard Baxter - Scroll down to point #4](#)) ([Read the Entire Book - here is the Index to The Reformed Pastor](#))

## **BE VIGILANT: SHEPHERD THE FLOCK**

**Be on guard....for all the flock** - Recall this is a command which calls for continual attention. How could they carry out this command? God's *commandments* always include His *enablements*. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to be the indwelling Helper of His sheep. Jesus' human representative, the "overseer" must yield to, be filled by and empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ in order to successfully carry out the supernatural work of being continually **on guard**.

Jehovah's question to Ezekiel is timeless...

**"Should not the shepherds  
feed the flock?"  
(Ezekiel 34:2)**

**All the flock** - Don't miss the word "**all**." **Barnes** has a good word on "all"...

All the flock the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the old and the young. It is the duty of ministers to seek to promote the welfare of each individual of their charge not to pass by the poor because they are poor, and not to be afraid of the rich because they are rich. A shepherd regards the interest of the tenderest of the fold as much as the strongest; and a faithful minister will seek to advance the interest of all. To do this he should know all his people; should be acquainted, as far as possible, with their unique needs, character, and dangers, and should devote himself to their welfare as his first and main employment (**Ed**: I would add, he should be praying through his church roster for each of his sheep individually -- all of them, even the obstreperous ones!).

**Jesus** said...

Do not be afraid, little **flock**, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. (Lk 12:32)

**Flock** ([4168](#))(*poimnion* from *poimen* = shepherd) was literally a flock of sheep but in the NT is applied only figuratively to spiritual sheep that make the community of Jesus' disciples, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The OT describes Israel as **God's flock** (Ps. 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 63:11; Jer. 13:17; 23:2-3; 31:10; Ezek. 34:2ff.; Mic. 2:12; 5:4; 7:14; Zech. 10:3).

The NT pictures the **church** as a **flock** and the Lord Jesus Christ as its **Shepherd** (Luke 12:32, John 10:1ff; Heb 13:20-note; 1 Pet. 2:25-note; 1Pe 5:2-4).

Therefore, I exhort the **elders** among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **shepherd** (aorist imperative) 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; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the **flock**. 4 And when the **Chief Shepherd** (the Lord Jesus Christ) appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, **clothe** (aorist imperative) yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. (1Pe 5:1-3-note, 1Pe 5:4-5-note)

## **CHECKLIST FOR SHEPHERDS...**

1) Shepherd the flock

- 2) Exercise oversight
- 3) Not with compulsion
- 4) Voluntarily
- 5) According to the will of God
- 6) Not for sordid gain
- 7) With eagerness
- 8) Not lording it over
- 9) Proving examples to the flock
- 10) Promise of an unfading crown of glory
- 11) Clothed with humility - God opposed to proud, gives grace to humble

The **TDNT** explains that

The term **poímnē** or **poímnion** is used for flocks or herds of sheep or cattle numbering from 20 to over 500. A mixed herd is in view in Mt. 25:32; such herds are common in ancient Palestine. The sheep and goats pasture together but are separated at night because goats are more susceptible to cold. On summer nights several shepherds come together with their flocks and watch over them in open fields. For better protection the flock might be kept in a walled court with the door closed and the shepherds on guard. (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#). Eerdmans)

## SOVEREIGN SELECTION BY THE SPIRIT

**Holy Spirit has made you overseers** - These men did not apply for the position. They did not receive this title because they were wealthy, well liked by all, successful in business, etc, but because God's Spirit appointed them to the position! What criteria does your church use in to select those God's Spirit has appointed (See Scriptural "definition" of an overseer - 1 Timothy 3:2-7)?

**John Phillips** adds that...

Elders are not chosen by popular vote. Only the **Holy Spirit** can equip a man for that work and endow him with the character, compassion, and the compulsion to undertake its arduous and time-consuming tasks. A man does not push himself into the position of an elder. Wealth and social position, business acumen, natural talent, and worldly success do not equip a man for the work of an elder.

Only **the Holy Spirit** can qualify and call a man to that work. Nor is it a work that can be lightly assumed, flippantly discharged, and easily dropped. If anyone thinks so let him read and read again this message of the great apostle until something of the awesomeness of the position and responsibilities of an elder are burned into his soul. It is easier to run a multi-national corporation than it is to shepherd God's "little flock," and a far less responsible work as well. (Ibid)

**Overseers** (bishops) ([1985](#)) (**episkopos** from **epi** = over or upon + **skopos** = goal or end one has in view = English "**scope**" as in microscope or telescope) is literally one who looks over closely or intently, who views carefully. The **episkopos** describes one who superintends, exercises oversight or watches over others, thus an "overseer" (one looking over another). The Latin equivalent is *super-visus*, someone who "looks over" things, a manager. From *super-visus* comes the English supervisor. **Oden** emphasizes that "**Episkopos** implies vigilance far more than hierarchy." Barclay sums up **episkopos** noting that it "always implies two things; first, oversight over some area or sphere of work and second, responsibility to some higher power and authority."

These men are appointed to be the guardians of the church and were to care for the sheep not as dictators but as spiritual leaders who provided godly examples (1Pe 5:1,2,3, 4-notes). **Click** for additional insights on **episkopos**. **Episkopos** is found five times in the NT - Acts 20:28; Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1Pe 2:25.

**John Trapp** regarding the **episkopos** quipped that...

many are *Aposcopi* rather than *Episcopi*, saith Espensaeus; byseers rather than overseers.

**MacArthur** - Some have suggested that **episkopos** derives its sense from the city administrator, inspector, or financial manager of Greek culture. Its New Testament usage, however, more closely parallels that of the Essene Jews of the Qumran community. The

overseers among the Essenes preached, taught, presided, exercised care and authority, and enforced discipline. Those functions more closely mirror that of the New Testament overseer than the more narrow use of the term in Greek culture. What are the responsibilities of the overseer? They are to rule (1Ti 5:17), to preach and teach (1Ti 5:17), to pray for the sick (Js 5:14), to care for the church (see notes 1 Peter 5:1; 5:2), to be examples for others to follow (1Pe 5:1,2-note), to set church policy (Acts 15:22ff.), and to ordain other leaders (1Ti 4:14).

The poem by **George Liddell** describes the character of an episkopos...

Give me a man of God—one man,  
Whose faith is master of his mind,  
And I will right all wrongs  
And bless the name of all mankind.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,  
And I will flame the darkest hearts  
With high resolve and clean desire.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
One mighty prophet of the Lord,  
And I will give you peace on earth,  
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
True to the vision that he sees,  
And I will build your broken shrines,  
And bring the nations to their knees

**Shepherd** ("to care for" = ESV, "to feed" = NJB, YLT, "tend and feed and guide" = Amp) [\(4165\)](#)(**poimaino** from **poimen** = shepherd) means to tend flocks like shepherds who carried out oversight, protecting, leading, encouraging, discipling, guarding, guiding and feeding ("feed and lead"). Paul uses this agricultural term metaphorically to exhort church leaders to exercise administrative and protective activity over the assembly of believers "to promote its edification and peace." (Barnes). English dictionaries say that "**to shepherd**" means to guide, direct or guard in the manner of a shepherd. In short, the **shepherd's** role concerning the flock is to...

### **Graze, Guide and Guard**

**Jesus**, the **Good Shepherd** (Jn 10:11, cp Ps 23:1-note), the **Great Shepherd** (Heb 13:20, 21-note), the **Chief Shepherd** (1Pe 5:4-note) gave clear instructions regarding the role of the shepherd of the flock in some of His last words (His words are always important, but "last words" are surely of very special import to His shepherds)...

**Tend** (**bosko** in the **present imperative** = continually feed, pasture, tend to the needs of) My lambs...**Shepherd** (**poimaino** in the - continually take care of, guide, look after, pasture) My sheep...**Tend** (**bosko** in the **present imperative**) My sheep. (Jn 21:15, 16, 17-notes)

**Spurgeon commenting on Jesus as our Shepherd in Ps 23:1:** The Lord is my shepherd. What condescension is this, that the infinite Lord assumes towards His people the office and character of a Shepherd! It should be the subject of grateful admiration that the great God allows Himself to be compared to anything which will set forth His great love and care for His own people. David had himself been a keeper of sheep, and understood both the needs of the sheep and the many cares of a shepherd. He compares himself to a creature weak, defenseless, and foolish, and he takes God to be his Provider, Preserver, Director, and, indeed, his everything (Ed: Pause a moment and praise Jesus as our **All in all**). No man has a right to consider himself the Lord's sheep unless his nature has been renewed (2Cor 5:17-note) for the scriptural description of unconverted men does not picture them as sheep, but as wolves or goats (cp Mt 25:32, 33). A sheep is an object of property, not a wild animal; its owner sets great store by it (1Co 6:20-note, Titus 2:14-note, cp Lev 20:26), and frequently it is bought with a great price. It is well to know, as certainly David did, that we belong to the Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no "if" nor "but", nor even "I hope so"; but he says, "The Lord is my shepherd." We must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence upon our heavenly Father. The sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, "**My**." (**Ed:** "Amen!") He does not say, "The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leads forth the multitude as his flock", but "The Lord is my shepherd;" if He be a Shepherd to no one else, He is a Shepherd to me; He cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me. The words are in the **present tense**. (**Ed:** In the Septuagint the Greek verb **poimaino** is indeed in the **present tense** signifying Jesus' continual shepherding of me, His too often unruly sheep! Thank You Jesus for Your kindness and faithfulness to forever be My Shepherd!



Hallelujah!) Whatever be the believer's position, he is even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.

At the end of the **letter to the Hebrews** we find a sober warning to **all spiritual leaders** (and a warning to the sheep)...

**Obey** (To the sheep: present imperative = command to make this their habitual practice) your leaders and **submit** (present imperative) to them, for they keep watch (ἀγρυπneo) - literally "abstaining from sleep!" ~ figuratively = keeping awake, attentive, watchful) over your **souls** (Note this! Our souls!) as **those who will give** (ἀποδομι) **an account** (See 2Cor 5:10-note; Ro 14:10-12-note). Let them do this with joy and not with grief (stenazo), for this would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:17-note)

**Brian Bell - Shepherd** - Our Lord is called the Good Shepherd who died (Jn.10:11); The Great Shepherd who lives (Heb13:20); The Chief Shepherd who is coming again (1 Pet 5:4). His ministers are rightfully called shepherds, & their people sheep. Howard Hendricks said, "If you can't stand the smell of sheep, you shouldn't be a shepherd." ([Sermon Notes](#))

**Church of God** - A brief technical note - Some manuscripts read "of the Lord" and others read "of the Lord and God." Most translations favor "of God."

**Horton** writes that the **church** was "an assembly made His own at a tremendous price, the precious blood of Jesus. (See Eph 1:7; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 14; 13:12-13.) His blood is the ground of the New Covenant (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20), and the shedding of His blood put the new covenant into effect and brings believers into right relationship with God (Rom. 5:9; Col. 1:20; Rev. 5:9). (Acts: A Logion Press Commentary)

**Church** ("the assembly" = YLT) ([1577](#)) (**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call; gives us our English ecclesiastical) literally means called out and in secular use described those citizens who were called out from their homes to be publicly assembled (e.g., a regularly summoned legislative body or an assembly of the citizens) or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Ekklesiā** was used of a general gathering of people (Acts 19:32, 40). In most of the NT uses **ekklesia** describes a people with a shared belief, an assembly of the Christian community (congregation, church). The **Septuagint** repeatedly used the Greek noun **ekklesia** to translate the Hebrew words describing the congregation or assembly of Israel (Dt 9:10, 18:16, 31:30, Jdg 20:2, 1Sa 17:47, 1Ki 8:14), and this same "OT meaning" is found in Hebrews 2:12 (quoting Ps 22:12) and Acts 7:38.

**BDAG** has this note on the Christian adoption of the word **ekklesia** - (**Ekklesia**) apparently became popular among Christians in Greek-speaking areas for chiefly two reasons: to affirm continuity with Israel through use of a term found in Gk. translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to allay any suspicion, esp. in political circles, that Christians were a disorderly group).

**He purchased with His own blood** - The Greek allows for rendering it either as "with His own blood" (NAS, KJV, ESV, et al) or "with the blood of His own." The NET Bible favors the latter and supplies the word "Son" to clarify by Whose blood it was purchased. New Jerusalem Bible is similar - "with the blood of His own Son." How did God accomplish this end? "He...did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all..." (Ro 8:32-note) Note the word "**own**" which in the Greek papyri was used as term of endearment to near relations! The upshot is that the church is God's, not man's! The people belong to God, not the pastor, even though he is responsible for feeding those that are under his care.

"God has not only redeemed His people **from** bondage and death but **for** Himself." (A W Pink)

**Thomas Constable** feels that "A better translation of the last part of this verse would be, "He [God the Father] purchased with the blood of His own [Son]" (cf. Ro 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20).

**Purchased** ("acquired with" = NAB, "obtained with" = NET, "bought with" = Berkeley; "paid the price for," "gained possession of") ([4046](#)) (**peripoieomai** from **peri** = around + **poiéo** = make) literally means to make around oneself (Vincent = "to make [*poieo*] to remain over and above [*peri*] hence to keep or save for one's self) and then or gain anything, making it one's own, by paying a price, by performing labor, etc.

Here are the NT uses, **peripoieomai** conveys

(1) In 1 Ti 3:13 the verb conveys the sense of to acquire

1Ti 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons **obtain** for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

(2) In Lk 17:33 the idea is to preserve or make secure for oneself

Luke 17:33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses [his life] will preserve it.

Here in Acts 20:28 the meaning is to pay the price for and so to purchase or gain possession of something.

The related noun **peripoiesis** is used in 1Pe 2:9 to describes believers as a "people possessed", the idea being that we have been acquired by purchase (and the price was Jesus' blemish-free blood! - 1Pe 1:18, 19-note) with the corresponding idea of preservation of that which is purchased. .

#### **Related Resources:**

- **New Covenant in the Old Testament;**
- **Why the New is Better;**
- **Abrahamic vs Old vs New**

**Phillips** - A shepherd guides and guards his sheep, grooming them, going before them, leading them beside still waters and green pastures. He knows each one by name. He fends for them, fights for them, feeds them, gathers them into the fold. The Lord Jesus portrayed Himself as a Shepherd. Paul reminds these elders that they are under-shepherds of "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Purchased at such cost, the Lord's people are of infinite worth, and the work of a shepherd one of awesome responsibility. (Ibid)

#### **Eastern Shepherds and Their Flocks**

The work of a shepherd in the East is in many respects different from a shepherd's work among ourselves. The Oriental flock does not graze within fenced pasturages, but moves hither and thither through the wild pasture lands, following the lead of the shepherd, and often going to a great distance from inhabited places. It therefore takes all the shepherd's vigilance to keep his flock together—to prevent one part of it from straying gradually, in search of pasturage, to the north, another to the south, another to the east, and another to the west. In these remote districts, too, attacks from wild beasts are not uncommon; a wolf or a bear will pounce suddenly upon an unsuspecting sheep, and the shepherd must risk his own life, as David did, to rescue the imperiled sheep. The shepherd, or overseer, is responsible to his employer for the safety of the sheep, and he must render a strict account of that which has been lost, or which has perished. Here is an extract from Oriental law on this point, as quoted by Paxton: "Cattle shall be delivered over to the cowherd in the morning; the cowherd shall tend them during the whole day with grass and water; and in the evening shall re-deliver them to the master, in the same manner as they were entrusted to him. If, by the fault of the cowherd, any of the cattle be lost or stolen, that cowherd shall make it good. When a cowherd has led cattle to any distant place to feed, if any die of distemper, in spite of the fact that the cowherd applied the proper remedy, the cowherd shall carry the head, the tail, the forefoot, or some such convincing proof taken from the animal's body, to the owner of the cattle. Having done this, he shall be no further answerable. If he neglects to act thus, he shall make good the loss." Paul, therefore, compares the Ephesian Church to a flock of sheep, seeking pasturage under the guidance of their shepherds, yet prone of themselves to wander, and constantly exposed to peril from wild beasts. The shepherds, he teaches, are answerable not only for the divisions which occur in the flock through their neglect, but also for the attacks of wild beasts, permitted by the same neglect. (S. S. Times.) (Biblical Illustrator)

**F B Meyer** has the following homiletical thoughts on Acts 20:28...

THERE are many lessons in this verse.

(1) The Christian worker must not neglect his own soul. He must take heed to himself, as well as to the flock. Our temptation is to neglect our close walk with God in our eagerness to save others.

(2) The overseer, elder, or bishop, is not set over the flock, but is in it. Note the force of the Greek, as given in R. v.: the flock in the which they are made bishops. So to the end of life the most eminent of God's servants must remember that he is but a saved sinner, needing the blood and righteousness of Christ as much as the weakest of his flock; and he also must lie down in green pastures, and be led beside still waters.

(3) The office of the minister is given by the Holy Ghost. It is He who lays on him the burden of souls, and equips him for his work. He, too, is willing to direct and use. How awful and solemn the responsibility! Woe be to us if we exercise our ministry only for the eye and ear of our fellow-men!

(4) Notice that the Church is distinctly asserted to be God's. "Feed the Church of God." We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. His by choice, by purchase, by the drawing of the Holy Ghost. We must get a right understanding of this doctrine of the Church, that she had been taken out of the world to be God's peculiar possession and delight.



(5) The purchase money of the Church is here said to be God's own blood. It is a remarkable expression. It stands alone in the Word of God, but brings out very distinctly the thought that the entire Godhead achieved man's redemption in the offering of the Cross. We are dear to God, and must give Him the benefit of His great expenditure! (Our Daily Homily)

**John Eadie** - Themselves were the first object of thought. You are sinners in need of the same salvation, and unless you have accepted that salvation yourselves, you are not fitted to save others — your own souls first, the souls of others afterwards. To the doctrine which they taught they were to take heed, lest error should mingle with their instructions. They were to impart the truth pure and simple, not corrupted by the "rudiments of the world" and "traditions of men," or tinged with "philosophy and vain deceit." Nor were they to be less careful of their example, of their own growth in the spiritual life. The apostle has himself stated the melancholy issue which he strove by self-command to avoid — "Lest that by any means, having preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a castaway." He warns Timothy, when placed over this Ephesian church, thus—"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." Their life should be in such harmony with their labour as to be a commentary upon it : for example gives power to precept — one reason, among others, why overseers of the flock belong to the flock, and are "men of like passions" with those whom they teach and govern. As under the former economy the priesthood was of human origin, that those vested with it might "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," so, under the second dispensation, there is a peculiar propriety in appointing men to the task of interpreting the books of the New Testament. Might not such a trust have been reposed in angels, those high and spotless intelligences who are not involved in the common apostasy of our species, and whose rank would command respect and attention ? Had such glorious beings been commissioned to descend on wings of love from their aerial abodes to our forlorn habitation, the world might indeed have been awed by their visits, and these messengers of grace might have commanded impression over a cowering assemblage ; yet, while they preached with unimpassioned argument and appeal, and, from the stores of their own celestial eloquence, urged reason after reason on man to embrace the Saviour; or while they narrated how they watched the cradle of the infant Jesus, ministered to Him in the wilderness, opened the portals of His grave, and formed the escort of His ascension ; or while they spoke of the evils of sin, and referred to their fellows whose rebellion had cast them out of heaven, and enlarged on that sovereign affection which had selected men as the objects of restoring mercy — while such might have been the themes of angelic address, so interesting in themselves and in the vehicle of their communication, still there would be a repulsion in the visage of these white-robed ambassadors — the radiancy of their countenance would prohibit a free access to them — their words might strike, but not affect, because the eloquence that springs from experience is wanting — the heart of man would feel an utter destitution of that assurance of succour and sympathy which community of nature alone can inspire, and which, arising from a feeling of common misery and common salvation, passes from heart to heart with electrical suddenness and power. Teachers of Christianity propose to others that remedy which they have embraced themselves. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit : then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." There is an appropriate efficacy in the thought that he who invites has himself been welcomed — that he who reasons has been induced by the force of his own arguments — that he who warns has known, but escaped the dangers against which he instructs — that he who encourages has felt the joys he proposes, or the perplexities he attempts to unravel. He believes — therefore he speaks ; his audience hear, and are inclined to believe. What in other teachers is enthusiasm, is in him but sobriety. "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." \* "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

**Acts 20:29** "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock:[ego oida](#) (1SRAI) [hoti eiseleusontai](#) (3PFMI) [meta ten](#) aphicin [mou lukoi bareis eis humas me pheidomenoi](#) (PMPMPN) [tou poimniou](#)."

- **Wolves:** Zep 3:3 Mt 7:15 10:16 Luke 10:3 Jn 10:12 2Pe 2:1-note
- **Not sparing:** Jer 13:20 23:1 Eze 34:2,3 Zec 11:17

### PAUL'S PROPHETIC WARNING FOR THE CHURCH!

**Know** ([1492](#))([eido](#)) means to know beyond a shadow of a doubt. It speaks of fullness of knowledge rather than a progress in knowledge (as with another Greek verb for "to know" = ginosko). **Eido/oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers is often given by the Holy Spirit. Surely Paul knew because he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit.

It is interesting to me that these are not popular passages for preaching Sunday sermons! Given that these are Paul's parting words warning of danger on the horizon, one wonders why this is not taught more frequently. I once discipled a young man who was very mature in the Scriptures and yet when I took him to this passage and other NT passages that speak of false teachers, he said that he was largely ignorant of this genre of NT teaching!

Beloved pastor, teacher, church leader, we must continually imitate Paul by not shrinking back from declaring to the sheep anything that is profitable (Acts 20:20) and representative of the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27 -- of course making sure that we speak the truth in love - Ep 4:15), lest we not be innocent of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26)!

**After my departure** - Notice this is a **time phrase**. **Query it** (5W/H'S). **Why here? What is the significance? Who is involved?, etc.** There is an old saying that "*When the cat's away, the mice will play!*" Paul was a good shepherd, for a good shepherd makes it his job to know each of his sheep, even by name! He would quickly spot a wolf in sheep's clothing! The **savage wolves** had to bide their time and wait for Paul to leave before they began their devouring of the flock.

Dear shepherd, do you know your sheep? Dear overseer, have you been appointed over a portion of a large flock and if so do you know them? As one of my old medical school professors used to say regarding life and death issues of the body "You can't not know!" How much more should we with a shepherding role heed that exhortation, for the life and death issues involve not the temporal state of the physical body, but the eternal state of the soul!

**Savage wolves** - Paul had referred to the church as a flock of sheep and the elders as shepherds and now extends the metaphorical description to label false teachers as **wolves**. Not just **wolves** (This **term of comparison** refers to a large predatory, crafty, greedy, rapacious, ravenous animal - that truth alone would have been bad enough!) but Paul adds that these **wolves** will be **savage** (Greek = **barus** - violent, fierce, cruel, vicious, ferocious). **Webster** says that **savage** describes those lacking the restraints normal to civilized human beings and implies the absence of inhibitions restraining civilized people, so that these individuals are filled with rage, lust, or other violent passions and demonstrate fury or malignity in looks or actions! **Paul is painting a strong word picture!** The question is - is the church hearing what the Spirit is saying through the apostle Paul? (cp Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 36, 13, 22 = **Seven Times!**)

**Among you** - **Guzik** comments that...

It is often easier for pastors to deal with the wolves that come from the outside - obviously false teachings and goofy winds of doctrine. But it is very difficult to deal with those who rise up from among yourselves, because you don't want to believe that they are in fact speaking perverse things and trying to draw away the disciples after themselves. But Paul insisted that such people were real, and that pastors would have to deal with them!

**A W Pink** comments on the metaphor of **wolves**...

What a solemn but suggestive and revealing word is that. The wolf, like the fox, is tricky and treacherous, subtle and sly, hence the words "cunning craftiness" in connection with the purveyors of error who "lie in wait to deceive" of Ephesians 4:14. They scruple not to employ the most dishonorable tactics and resort to tricks which honest men of the world would scorn to use. The wolf is cruel and merciless: so are these deceivers of souls. They prate about love, but they are full of hatred toward those who expose them. They are greedy, having voracious appetites, and false prophets are men of insatiable ambition, hungry for applause, avaricious. Jeremiah 23:32, speaks of their "lightness" or irreverence, and Zephaniah 3:4, also says, "their prophets are light and treacherous." So far from being sober and solemn they are frivolous and frothy: it cannot be otherwise, for the fear of God is not upon them. (From An exposition of the Sermon on the Mount)

**Kenneth Gangel** speaks to the modern church regarding (in many congregations) some much needed preventative maintenance writing that...

The church can resist false teaching in direct proportion to its knowledge of and dedication to the Scripture. (**Ed: A Loud Amen!**) (Acts. Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Comment:** The United States government knows that the best way to detect a counterfeit \$20 is to be intimately familiar with the real thing and thus examination of real twenty dollar bills is a major segment in the training of new agents! The analogy with the Church, the infiltration of purveyors of perverse doctrine and the need for focusing on the Word of Truth should be clear! Does your church have serious, in depth Bible studies? I admit my bias, but I am convinced that the Precept upon Precept Inductive Bible studies are hands down the best in the world for training sheep how to discern "counterfeit doctrines." Go to their website at [Precept Ministries International](http://www.PreceptMinistriesInternational.com). Yes, they are time consuming (4-5 hours of personal study, then 1.5-2 hours discussion once per week). There is a sad misconception that Precept Bible studies are primarily for women. Wrong! These studies are for all saints. Of all the Bible studies I have led or taught, the Precept studies have borne more fruit than any other study (souls have been born again and I did not even know it -- I gave no "invitation" and am not especially "evangelistic"! God's Spirit used God's Word to save

one man in the study of the Revelation. He was attending a liberal church which did not preach the Word, and somehow heard about our study on the other side of the city of Austin! Little, did I or he know that God had providentially brought him to the study of Revelation in order to be saved by grace through faith. Why? Because in His omniscience, God knew that less than 6 months after he began the study, he would have an aggressive recurrence of his previously "cured" malignant melanoma and would be falling asleep. And when he fell asleep, he was indubitably in Christ. I could tell many similar stories of marriages saved, of men going from immaturity to maturity, of men hearing the call to go to foreign lands and teach His Word, etc). Dear pastor, you have no need to fear Precept Bible studies, except those who take them will begin to ask for more solid food! Feel free to email me at the [preceptaustin.org](http://preceptaustin.org) if you have any questions.

**Not sparing** (5339)(**pheidomai**) means to treat leniently, to forbear, to spare, to avoid, to refrain from doing something. To save someone from trouble, loss or discomfort (2Co 1:21, 1Co 7:28, With a negative particle [*me*] here in Acts 20:29 and in Ro 8:32).

**Present tense** = These wolves are relentless and continually not sparing of the flock. Paul is saying here that their attacks on the God's Truth and God's sheep know no limits! **Beware!** These wolves are "alive and well" and are ever worming their way into God's flocks. These wolves have always been around God's people masquerading in "religious" garb and gab (cp Jer 23:1, Ezek 34:2-3).

**Peter** issues a prophetic warning similar to Paul's writing that

**false prophets** also arose among the people (referring to Israel in the OT), just as there will also be false teachers **among** (Notice where the teachers are - an inside job!) you, who **will secretly introduce** (**pareisago** = bring in error alongside the truth! Upshot: Shepherds and sheep had better know the Truth!) destructive (**apoleia** = causing utter ruin, complete loss! KJV = "damnable") heresies ("destructive sects," "destructive opinions," "destructive viewpoints," "disruptive views") , even denying the Master Who bought them (1Cor 6:20, Titus 2:14, Rev 5:9), bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2Peter 2:1-note)

**Flock** (4168)(**poinnion** from **poimen** = shepherd) a flock of sheep but here spiritual sheep that make belong to Jesus, citizens not of this earth but of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Acts 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them: **kai** ex **humon auton anastesontai** (3PFMI) **andres lalountes** (PAPMPN) **diestrammena** (RPPNPA) **tou apospan** (PAN) **tous mathetas opiso auton.**:

- **And from among your:** Mt 26:21-25 1Ti 1:19,20 2Ti 2:17,18 4:3,4 2Pe 2:1-3 1Jn 2:19 2Jn 1:7 Jude 1:4-16 Rev 2:6
- **speaking:** Pr 19:1 23:33 Isa 59:3 1Ti 5:13 6:5 2Pe 2:18 Jude 1:15,16
- **Draw away:** Acts 5:36,37 21:38 Mt 23:15 1Co 1:12-15 Ga 6:12,13)

## THESE "WOLVES" TWIST THE TRUTH

**From among your own selves** - Do not miss Paul's crystal clear warning - false teaching is often an "*inside*" job. The enemy has his deceiving ambassadors of light situated amongst the flock of genuine sheep. Paul now explains the metaphor of wolves is not their physical danger but the "theological" drift they espouse!

**Speaking perverse things** - Make no mistake. They mislead by the spoken word, specifically the crooked words they teach. If we know the "straight" Word of God, we can detect the "perverse" words they speak.

**Perverse** (1294) **diastrepho** from **dia** = separation, in two, throughout + **strépho** = turn) is a verb (used here as an "adjective") which means literally to twist throughout or to distort. To turn different ways. To twist about. **Diastrepho** was used metaphorically in the NT meaning to pervert or to distort. The idea is to cause one to depart from an accepted standard of oral or spiritual values. Paul uses the **perfect tense** which says their words are permanently distorted. There is no spiritual life giving, soul edifying quality in these words!

**Diastrepho** was used in secular Greek to describe a piece of pottery that a careless craftsman had misshaped or that had somehow become distorted before being fired in the oven.

**TDNT** notes that **diastrepho**

means in Greek "to twist," "to dislocate," "to confuse." In Hellenistic and especially Stoic ethics **diastrophé** (literally used to describe the twisting of a fractured limb - distortion) is a technical term for the moral corruption

of the man. The nature of man, which is originally good and oriented to the good, is "twisted" (diastrephetai) by bad teaching (**Ed:** Read Genesis 3:1-7 which teaches that Satan, the crafty seducer, perverted and twisted God's Word, introducing doubt about the goodness of God and the integrity of His Word which had the effect of drawing Adam and Eve away from the Word of Truth and the God of the Truth!) (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#). Eerdmans)

**Draw away** (645)(**apospao** from **apó** = from + **spáo** = to draw or pull) literally means to draw, pull or drag away from. **Apospao** is used literally to draw out a sword in Mt 26:51. **Apospao** is used figuratively here in Acts 20:30 to describe drawing someone away from ("attracting" them from) a point of view (resulting in alienation). A secular use means "alienate pupils from someone." Another classic writing is translated "so that they might be wrested from their sins." Other figurative uses mean to draw away from a place (Lk 22:41) or from people (Acts 21:1).

Here are some other non-Biblical uses of **apospao** from **Moulton and Milligan** -

"you wrote me not to withdraw the gang (of workmen engaged in the copper mines) from Philoteris before they had finished the work." "Withdraw," with no suggestion of violence, though with breach of contract, is the sense in numerous formal documents - "in a case of adoption...in the indenture of a slave...where in a contract of apprenticeship a father is not to have the power of removing his son from his master until the completion of the period.... where a widow threatens to take away her son from a man in whose charge he had been left....In the marriage contract, P Oxy III. 496(9) (A.D. 127), provision is made that in the event of a separation taking place, the bride shall have the power to "withdraw" a certain female slave, who forms part of her dowry."

**Apospao** - 4x in the NT and 6x in the Septuagint (Lev 22:24; Josh 8:6 ["drawn them away"]; Jdg 16:9; Job 41:17 ["cannot be separated."]; Isa 28:9; Jer 12:14 ["I am about to **uproot** them"]). Here are the other 3 uses in the New Testament...

Mt 26:51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and **drew out** his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Lk 22:41 And He **withdrew from** them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

Acts 21:1 When we **had parted from** (apospao - drew ourselves away from) them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara

**Disciples** (3101)(**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf **inductive Bible study**) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers.

## Related Resources

- matheteuo - make disciples
- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2](#)
- [Make Disciples 3](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)
- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

**Ralph Earle** - As followers of Jesus we are to be, first of all, learners. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**What happened to the church at Ephesus?** 2Ti 1:15 and Rev 2:4 would strongly support that Paul's concerns for the church in Ephesus were justified!

**Pohill** records some historical early fulfillments of Paul's prophetic warnings noting that...

By the second century Asia was a virtual seedbed for Christian heresy. Paul's warning was thus timely and essential. It is not by chance that this section both opens and closes with an exhortation to vigilance (Acts

20:28, 31), and Paul's reference to his three-year ministry with the Ephesians was not just a reminder of his warnings but also an appeal to be faithful to the sound teachings he had brought them (cf. Acts 20:20f.) (New American Commentary).

**See Related Resources: Doctrine;** See also study of **Sound** used in phrase "sound doctrine" - cp 1Ti 1:10, 2Ti 4:3-note, Titus 1:9-note)

**A W Pink** on the phrase **draw away the disciples after them...**

In that last clause we have another mark of the false prophets. They are inveterate proselytizers. They continually obtrude themselves upon people's attention. They are ever creeping into houses, "leading captive silly women led away with divers lusts." They are continually coaxing and wheedling folk to come to their meetings. But the true prophet never attempts guile or presses anyone to attend his services. No, he is content to follow his Master's practice: "he that hath ears to hear let him hear," and there he leaves it. When a place receives them not they "go their way" (Luke 10:10) instead of pleading and arguing and seeking to draw disciples "after them." (From An exposition of the Sermon on the Mount).

Acts 20:31 "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: **dio gregoreite**, (2PPAM) **mnemoneuontes** (PAPMPN) **oti trietian nukta kai emeran ouk epausamen** (1SAMI) **meta dakruon noutheton** (PAPMSN) **hena hekaston**..:

- **Be on the alert:** Mt 13:25 Mk 13:34-37 Luke 21:36 2Ti 4:5 Heb 13:17 Rev 16:15
- **For a period:** Ac 19:8,10
- **Admonish:** Eze 3:17-20 Mt 3:7 1Co 4:14 Col 1:28 1Th 5:14
- **night:** Ac 20:7,11 1Th 2:9,10 2Th 3:8
- **With tears:** Ac 20:19)

**Therefore (term of conclusion) - What's Paul concluding?** He is reiterating the need of the elders to be alert for **savage wolves** because of the deadly impact their false teaching can have on the souls of God's flock.

**Be on the alert** (1127)(**gregoreuo** from **egeiro** = to arise, arouse) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. Later **gregoreuo** came to be used in the moral sphere to call for one to **be vigilant, on the alert**, and in a **constant state of readiness**. **Gregoreuo** describes a mind which is (spiritually) alert not asleep. **Gregoreuo** means to take heed lest a lapse of attention might result in being overtaken unawares by some destructive force or calamity (i.e., false teaching of savage wolves).

Most of the NT uses of **gregoreuo** refer to the believer's being spiritually awake and alert, as opposed to being spiritually indifferent and listless. Secular Greek used **gregoreuo** to describe people carefully crossing a river while stepping on slippery stones. Failure to be alert might result in an unwanted dip in the water!

As with the command to **be on guard** in Acts 20:28, **gregoreuo** is **present imperative** which is a command for continual alertness for savage wolves. These **wolves** are like father, like son. Their "father" is the devil (a liar - Jn 8:44) who continually prowls around seeking victims he might devour (1Pe 5:8-note), and his offspring follow suit looking for stray, gullible, shallow taught sheep.

**Charles Simeon** commenting on 1Peter 5:8 writes that...

**Unwatchfulness**, even in a victorious army, exposes it to defeat: much more must it subject us to the power of our subtle enemy. Peter had experienced its baneful effects. He had been warned of Satan's intention to assault him (Lk 22:31). He had been commanded to **pray** lest he should fall by the temptation (Lk 22:40, cp Mt 26:41-note); but he slept when he should have been praying (Lk 22:45, 46). He stands in this respect, like Lot's wife (Lk 17:32, Ge 19:26), a monument to future generations; but vigilance on our part will counteract the designs (see *methodeia*) of Satan. The armed Christian, watching unto prayer, must be victorious (Ep 6:18-note).. ([1 Peter 5:8, 9 The Means of Defeating Satan's Malice](#))

**Beare** writes that...

Confidence in God must not lead to slackness; the spiritual warfare that they wage demands vigilance.

**Remembering** (present tense = continually recalling to mind) (3421)(**mnemoneuo** from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means exercising memory, calling something to mind, recollecting, paying attention to something so as to be warned (eg Lk 17:32).

**I did not cease to admonish** - Non-stop warning (Note that the word for 'hot' in Greek signifies absolutely not!) Remember Paul's



charge to all of us in 1Cor 11:1. **Dear leader, are you imitating Paul by continually admonishing your sheep?** Perhaps you think its a different day. Paul lived in the first century when Christian doctrines were just beginning to be established. We don't have that same need today. Have you checked the "spiritual fodder" on the internet lately? If you have, then you know that the need has not "ceased" for leaders to warn the sheep without ceasing.

**Night and day** - Paul likes the phrase "night and day" (7/13 uses in Scripture are by Paul Acts 20:31, 26:7, 1Th 2:9, 3:10, 2Th 3:8, 1Ti 5:5, 2Ti 1:3.) This phrase serves to further amplify/emphasize the fact that Paul "did not cease" giving "prophetic" warnings about the "coming invasion" of false teachers/teaching.

**Cease** ("I did not stop" = NET, "unceasingly" = NAB, "I never stopped")([3973](#))(**pauo**) means to cease (middle voice = oneself) from an activity in which one is engaged. **Pauo** in the active sense means to cause something or someone to cease from some activity or state. To make stop. To stop, restrain, refrain, quit, desist. To come to an end.

**F B Meyer** comments...

"Remember," he said to the elders of the Ephesian Church, "that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). Each word is significant! Not content with appealing to them by day, he must needs invade his nights; when worn by emotion, labour, and teaching, his tired body might surely claim repose. Nor was this a spasmodic devotion to be followed by spells of indolence and lethargy. He did not cease this ministry for three long years; but pursued it without relaxation, without interruption, without pause. Nor was this work prosecuted with the persistence of a zealot or the eagerness of a partisan; but with the tears of a soul lover. (Paul A Servant of Jesus Christ)

**Admonish** (warned, cautioned, gently reproved, exhorted)([3560](#))(**noutheteo** from **noús** = mind + **tithemi** = place; see **Nouthesia**) literally means to place in the mind and so to warn or give notice to beforehand especially of danger or evil. The idea is to lay it on the mind or heart of the person, with the stress being on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will, emotions and disposition. The idea is to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. **Noutheteo** describes "putting sense into someone's head", alerting them of the serious consequences of their actions and does not mean being judgmental or critical in a superior manner but instead imparting a caring kind of warning against danger. **Noutheteo** is in the **present tense** which indicates Paul was continually admonishing, warning, cautioning, etc

English dictionaries state that to **admonish** is to indicate duties or obligations to; to express warning or disapproval to especially in a gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner; to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement to; to reprove firmly but not harshly; to advise to do or against doing something; warn; caution.

Writing to the disciples of Jesus at Rome Paul exhorted them...

Now I urge you, brethren, **keep your eye** (skopeo in the present tense = continually keep your attention) on those who cause dissensions (dichostasia = divisions) and hindrances (skandalon = that which entices others to stumble) contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive (exapatao in the present tense = they continually thoroughly beguile and lead astray their victims) the hearts of the unsuspecting. (Ro 16:17-18-note)

**Guzik** adds...

Some translate warning "counseling." The ancient Greek verb nouthetountes means, "to impart understanding," "to lay on the mind or the heart." The stress is on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will and disposition. It describes a basic means of education. The work of warning - or helping to impart understanding - was a passion for Paul in ministry (Acts 20:31). **It is also the job of church leaders** (1Th 5:12-note) and of the church body in general (Col 3:16), providing that they are able to admonish others (Ro 15:14-note).

**Each** ([1538](#)) (**hekastos** from **hékas** = separate) means one of an aggregate in a distributive sense - each, every, each one (see below).

**Each one** (hena hekaston) - This phrase combines **hekastos** (above) and **heis**, which is the Greek noun signifying one. This combination strongly conveys the idea of singling out every single individual. I think Paul means this literally -- he literally warned every single individual about the dangers ahead. Perhaps he is referring to every single elder.

## THE MINISTRY OF WARNING



F B Myer used this verse for his devotional in "Our Daily Walk"...

THE MINISTRY of warning should be a recognized part of the work of the Church and of each individual member. The foghorn warns the ship from the deadly rocks; the red light warns the train of imminent danger; in the days of the plague people were warned from infected areas: how much more should we, who know the wrath of God which abides on those who refuse Christ, raise our voice in warning. We should do it deliberately, earnestly, patiently, and in reliance upon the Spirit of God to make our words, however much they may be resented, the means of arresting the wicked from the error of his ways, and those who are taking their first steps in forbidden paths from pursuing them (Ezek 33:7-9).

How wonderful it is that God does not commission angels to carry His warnings and appeals; instead of this, the work that angels might love to do is entrusted to men. It is at our peril that we neglect our opportunities in this direction. If the signalman is placed at a point where many lines of rail cross or diverge, and he sleeps at his post, or neglects his duty, he may be tried for manslaughter; and if we know of people in the immediate circle of our influence who are in danger of ruining their physical, moral, and spiritual well-being, we are bound to raise a warning voice. If we saw, upon the upper reaches of a river, a boat full of people hastening towards the rapids unheeding the danger, surely we might be guilty of being an accessory in their destruction, if we failed to do something to warn them of their peril.

Accompanying our words of warning, there should be the clear reiteration of the Love of God. He does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It is not enough to try and prevent men from taking the wrong path, we must urge and allure them to take the pleasant ways of righteousness and peace. All are included in the love of God. Even sin cannot turn away His love, which is like that described in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or 1Cor 13.

PRAYER - O God, we have left undone many things that we ought to have done. Hands have been reached out for help which we have not given; hearts have turned to us for sympathy which we have not blessed. Forgive us, we pray Thee, and at whatever cost may we follow Christ in His redemptive purpose. AMEN.

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: [kai ta nun paratithemai](#) (1SPMI) [humas to theo kai to logo tes charitos autou to dunameno](#) (PPPMSD) [oikodomesai](#) (AAN) [kai dounai](#) (AAN) [ten kleronomian en tois hegiasmenois](#) (RPPMPD) [pasin.](#):

- **I commend:** Ac 14:23,26, 15:40 Ge 50:24 Jer 49:11 Jude 1:24,25
- **and to the Word of His grace:** Ac 20:24 Heb 13:9
- **Build:** Ac 9:31 Jn 15:3 17:17 1Co 3:9,10 Eph 2:20-22 4:12,16 Col 2:7 Jude 1:20
- **And to give:** Ac 26:18 Jer 3:19 Eph 1:18 Col 1:12, 3:24 Heb 9:15 1Pe 1:4,5
- **Who are sanctified:** 1Co 1:2, 6:11, Heb 2:11, 10:14 Jude 1:1)

## A CALL TO LOOK UPWARD

**And now - Expression of time.** In view of the fact that enemies will arise and the elders must be able to contend for the faith, they need God and His Word to lead them in victory over the forces of darkness.

**I commend you to God** - This parallels the order of Paul's earlier charge to the elders to **first be on guard for yourselves** (Acts 20:28).

**John Gill**

The apostle, in commending them to Him, commends them to His grace, wisdom, and power. To His grace; to supply their need; to fit them for every duty He shall call them to, and for every trial He shall exercise them with. They are also commended to His wisdom, to counsel and direct them in all their ways. Likewise, the saints are commended to the power of God, to keep and preserve them. For it is by that alone they are kept; being weak and liable to daily backslidings. They, therefore, should commit themselves to Him, who is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

**Commend** ("entrust you to" = NET, NLT) ([3908](#))([paratithemi](#) from **para** = beside + **tithemi** = place; see also related noun

**paratheke**) literally means to place something beside, to set alongside or set something before someone (Lk 9:16, 10:8, 11:6, 1Cor 10:27). In classical Greek **paratithemi** described anything being deposited with a friend for the purpose of safekeeping. The idea is to **entrust** someone to the care, safekeeping or protection of someone and in the present context clearly speaks of Paul placing the elders in the hands of **God** and the **Word of God** that they in turn might be able to feed the flock of God. This pattern is timeless.

Who is it Who builds us up? Is this not God the Holy Spirit, (so to speak) the "Chief Operating Officer" (COO) of the Trinity, the One Who uses our intake of the Word of His grace and thereby miraculously, supernaturally transforms us from glory to glory into the image of God's Son, Christ Jesus (2 Cor 3:18-[note](#))? I think indeed this is the sweet Spirit Who is the "Construction Superintendent" in charge of our daily, progressive sanctification into greater degrees of Christ-likeness (1 Peter 1:2-[note](#)). This begs the question - am I daily seeking to be filled with the Word of His grace (Col 3:16-[note](#)) and the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29-[note](#), Eph 5:18-[note](#)) so that He might have His way with me throughout my busy day, using even the problems and pressures to mold me into the image of His Son? (Ro 8:29-[note](#)) If not, I am missing the "opportunity of a lifetime!" May each of us beg God's Spirit to TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS (not our years) so that when all is said and done we might be enabled to present to Jesus at the Bema Seat (2 Cor 5:10-[note](#)) a heart that has walked wisely in this world (Ps 90:12-[note](#)), during the days of our life whether they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years (Ps 90:10).

LORD PLEASE TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS THAT WE MAY PRESENT TO YOU A HEART OF WISDOM for Your glory. Amen

We don't need more motivational conferences, church growth seminars, new methods of ministry, and on and on. We need to return to "the **ancient paths** where the good way is, and walk in it; and (both shepherds and sheep) shall find rest for (their) souls" declares the promise keeping God (Jer 6:16). While it is important to see church members actively engaged in ministry, it is more important to first and foremost make sure they are actively engaged with **God and the Word of His grace**. Men and women who are continually being filled with the Word of Christ (Col 3:16-note), can't help but carry out the Work of Christ, in the energy of the Spirit of Christ, all for the Glory of God! In these dark last days in American Christianity, may God be pleased to revive His Church according to His Word of Grace ministered by the Spirit of Grace (Ps 119:25-[note](#), Heb 10:29-note).

**Mark Dever** writes that we should be...

encouraging churches to become more deliberate about "setting forth the truth plainly." People are transformed and renewed in the likeness of Christ when they look at God as He has revealed Himself in both His written and His incarnate Word. The job of the church, then, is not to show people a reflection of themselves. We are instead biblically obliged to raise their gaze, redirecting their attention from themselves to their Creator. There is no secret to a transforming Christian ministry save the power of God's Word and the life-giving breath of His Spirit (Ezek. 37:1-14). **You don't need a catchy new metaphor. You don't need the latest evangelism program. You don't need to change the name of your church. You don't need a pastor with a grand scheme for growth and effectiveness and success as the world would define them. What is needed most today is a commitment to being deliberate about setting forth the truth plainly, because the truth as we gaze on it in Christ is what transforms us, what builds us up and sets us free** (John 17:17 ; Acts 20:32 ; John 8:36 ). So a healthy church is a Godward-looking church. We look in dependence on Him for our message, our method, and the transformation of our churches into the image of Christ. ([The Deliberate Church Building Your Ministry on the Gospel](#))

**Paratithemi** was one of the last words spoken by Jesus before His death on the Cross...

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I **COMMIT** (paratithemi) MY SPIRIT."  
And having said this, He breathed His last. (Lk 23:46)

In secular usage the figurative sense of **paratithemi** was to give someone something in trust and thus to "deposit" it with them. **Paratithemi** conveys the picture of a precious treasure being deposited as a trust into another's hands -- ponder that thought as you think of Paul entrusting these spiritual leaders of the flock to God! These men were precious to him.

Paul understood the importance of **paratithemi** in ministry for the Church at Antioch had **commended** him "to the grace of God for the work" of planting churches in Asia (Acts 14:26), and he himself had **commended** the elders of those new churches "to the Lord in Whom they had believed." (Acts 14:23). In Thessalonica Paul entered the synagogue and for three Sabbaths was "explaining and **giving evidence** (paratithemi) that the Messiah had to suffer and rise again from the dead." (Acts 17:2-3). In his first letter to Timothy Paul said...

This command I **entrust** (paratithemi) to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously

made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight (1Ti 1:18)

Then in Paul's second letter to Timothy he exhorted him...

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these **entrust** (paratithemi) to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2Ti 2:2)

Those entrusted with **the word of His grace** must be faithful, reliable, trustworthy men who would not swerve aside because of fear or favor, nor who would not compromise with the spirit of this perverse and crooked age.

**Alexander Maclaren** offers his literal translation of **paratithemi** in Acts 20:32 as...

"I lay you down beside God." That is beautiful, is it not? Here had Paul been carrying the Ephesian Church on his back for a long time now. He had many cares about them, many forebodings as to their future, knowing very well that after his departure, grievous wolves were going to enter in. He says, "I cannot carry the load any longer; here I lay it down at the Throne, beneath those pure eyes, and that gentle and strong hand." For to commend them to God is in fact a prayer casting the care which Paul could no longer exercise upon Him. And that is the highest expression of, as it is the only soothing for, manly Christian solicitude and affection.

The parting counsels involved in the commendation.

1. "Cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart," as the limpet does to the rock. Cling to Jesus Christ, the revelation of God's grace. And how do we cling to Him? What is the cement of souls? Love and trust; and whoever exercises these in reference to Jesus Christ is built into Him, and belongs to Him, and has a vital unity knitting him with that Lord.

2. Cleave to "the word of His grace." Try to understand its principles better; study your Bibles with more earnestness; believe more fully than you have ever done that in that great Gospel there lies every truth that we need, and guidance in all circumstances. Bring the principles of Christianity into your daily life; walk by the light of them; and live in the radiance of a present God. ([Parting Words](#))

## **THE PRIMACY OF THE WORD OF GOD'S GRACE**

**The Word of His Grace** - The Gospel. In Acts 20:24 Paul had just declared that the Gospel he proclaimed was **the Gospel of the grace of God.**" Notice the effects of the Word of His grace, the Gospel of our salvation -

(1) It has the power to bring men to faith in Christ (Ro 1:16note) ("past tense salvation" = justification),

(2) It has the power to build them up in the faith (cp "grow in respect to salvation" 1Pe 2:2note) ("present tense salvation" = sanctification) and

(3) It has the power to give them an inheritance, one which Peter says is imperishable, will not fade away and is reserved in heaven for us (1Pe 1:4-note). ("future tense salvation" = glorification)

Elders must be fed the Word in order to be equipped to feed the Word to the flock they shepherd. Shepherds, are you in the Word daily and even more is that word in you?

**Related Resource: Three Tenses of Salvation**

**Dawson Trotman** emphasizes that "*The first and continual need in the spiritual life is for food,*" referring to the Word of God. ([Born to reproduce](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** says the **word of His grace** is...

the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, with all the great truths that cluster round and are evolved from it, is the all-sufficient source of enlightenment and security for individuals and for Churches. And whosoever will rightly use and faithfully keep that great word, no evil shall befall him, nor shall he ever make shipwreck of the faith. It is 'able to build you up,' says Paul. In God's Gospel, in the truth concerning Jesus Christ the divine Redeemer, in the principles that flow from that Cross and Passion, and that risen life and that ascension to God, there is all that men need, all that they want for life, all that they want for godliness. The basis of their creed, the sufficient guide for their conduct, the formative powers that will shape into beauty and nobleness their characters, all lie in the germ in this message, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' Whoever keeps that in mind and memory, ruminates upon it till it becomes the nourishment of his soul, meditates on it till the precepts and the promises and the principles that are enwrapped in it unfold themselves before Him, needs none other guide for life, none other solace in sorrow,

none other anchor of hope, none other stay in trial and in death. 'I commend you to God and the word of His grace,' which is a storehouse full of all that we need for life and for godliness. Whoever has it is like a landowner who has a quarry on his estate, from which at will he can dig stones to build his house. If you truly possess and faithfully adhere to this Gospel, you have enough.

**Ebenezer Temple** says it is called **the word of His grace** because...

- (1) It originates in His grace.
- (2) It records His grace.
- (3) It is the instrument of His grace.

The word of God's grace is given to instruct the ignorant—reclaim the wanderer—comfort the mourner—arouse the careless—confirm the wavering—and edify the Christian. The words here:—

1. Imply the commencement of a work. When we speak of building up, it naturally supposes a foundation is laid and a work begun. This is the case with every true Christian. In the work of conviction, the rubbish is taken away, all views of obtaining salvation by human merit are renounced. Christ is cordially embraced as all our salvation.

2. Insure its continuance. Christians are built up in—

- (1) Knowledge.
- (2) Faith (Jude 1:20).
- (3) Love.
- (4) Holiness.

III. The sublimity of their destinies. Notice here:—

1. The state of happiness expressed. "An inheritance."

- (1) It is a rich inheritance.
- (2) It is a purchased inheritance—bought by the precious blood of Christ.
- (3) It is reserved. Ready prepared for every believer.
- (4) It is eternal.

2. The individuals who shall possess it. "Them which are sanctified."

3. The mode of its conveyance. "To give you." It is the free gift of God's grace.

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that...

God's Word is a tool for **building**. "'Is not my word like fire,' declares the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?'" (Jer 23:29). Sometimes God's Word has to break down before it can build up. Sometimes God's Word has to burn before it can warm. But God's Word is like a hammer—it is a tool for breaking down the old life and building up the new life. It enables us to build the church...(Acts 20:32). If you want to build your life, you must use tools, and the greatest tool of all is the Word of God. The better you understand the meaning of key Bible words, the more tools you will have in your "spiritual workshop" for building your own Christian life and helping to build the church. ([Key Words of the Christian Life](#))

**Mark Dever** adds that...

The New Testament witness to the **primacy of God's Word** in His method is just as conspicuous: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). **The Word sustains us**: "In the beginning was the Word, and . . . in Him was life....And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 4, 14). **Jesus, the Word made flesh, is ultimate life incarnate**: "The word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing" (Acts 19:20; cf. Acts 6:7; 12:20-23, 24). **The Word grows and fights**: "And now I commend you 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" (Acts 20:32). **The Word is what builds us up and preserves us**: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Ro 1:16; cf. 1Cor 1:18). **The Gospel, God's clearest expression of His Word, is His effective power for salvation**: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). **God's Word is that which creates faith**: "[W]hen you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as

the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1Th 2:13-note). **The Word performs God's work in believers:** "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12-note). **God's Word convicts:** "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18-note). **God's Word gives us new birth.** James advises a little later, "in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21-note). **The Word saves us. Peter also claims regenerating power for God's Word:** "[F]or you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. . . . And this is the word which was preached to you" (1Pe 1:23, 25-note).

**Grace** (favor) (5485)(**charis**) in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32-note where "freely give" is **charizomai** [word study] from **charis** = a grace gift!). **Grace** addresses man's sin, while **mercy** addresses man's misery.

**Which - What is "which?" "To what does it refer in context?"** God's Word, especially the Gospel.

But beware that the intake of God's word is a means to an end (i.e., Christlikeness) and not an end in itself. A church can be saturated with God's word and still be sterile as far as spiritually reproducing itself. The primary purpose of God's Word is to radically alter our way of life!

**Is able** (present tense = continually able) (1410)(**dunamai**) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. So what is Paul saying about the Word of His Grace? What is he saying about the Gospel? Clearly he believes that the Gospel has supernatural power, miracle working power and that this power is an intrinsic, inherent component of the word of God's grace! Is this not an incredible truth beloved! The Gospel is be capable of breaking a stone cold, hard heart, strong enough to break the power of an ensnaring addictive sin, supernaturally enough to cause spiritual growth.

**Dunamai** is in the **present tense** which signifies **the Word of His grace** is continuously able or continually has inherent power to save us. In other words not only can it save us the first time (justification) but it can supernaturally "save" us every day (sanctification). Beloved, this begs the question - Are you daily going to the "well of living water" the life giving, powerful Word of Truth? If not you are vulnerable to the wiles of the world, the flesh and the devil. If you are substituting devotionals for the pure Word of Grace then you are making a serious mistake. Devotionals are fine but they should never be used in lieu of God's Word for only His Word of grace is able to build you up!

Luke has a similar statement about the power of the Word of God's grace writing that...

**No** (ou = absolutely **no**) **word** (rhema) from God shall be void of power (**adunateo** - essentially the converse of **dunamai**). (Luke 1:37ASV)

**Comment:** This verse says not one single Word of God is powerless or unable to accomplish what God intends. Modern translations do not convey the sense of the power of the Word quite as clearly as the **ASV** - e.g., the **NAS** = "*For nothing will be impossible with God.*" The **Amplified Version** is somewhat better "*For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment.*"

**James** uses **dunamai** in his description of the **word**...

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the **word** implanted, which **is able** (**dunamai** also in in the **present tense**) to save your souls. (James 1:21-note)

**Related Resource: Simple Inductive Study on the Power of God's Word**

**G. Swinnock** writes regarding the Gospel, the Word of God's grace...

### **I. To purify your affections.**

It is the usual pipe through which grace may be conveyed into the vessels of your hearts. The laws of men may reform your actions, but it is the gospel of God which can renew your affections. Some poets speak of musicians that by the force of their music can make stones leap into walls, and tame beasts, be they never so savage. The word of God's grace will do much more—it will change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh; it will tame lions, and turn them into lambs (Isaiah 11:4-6).

### **II. To be the rule of your conduct.**

1. It contains not only promises for your consolation, but also precepts for your conversations; therefore it is called a royal law (James 2:8). A law, because it is to be the canon of our lives. A royal law, because given us by God, sovereign and dominion over all, and therefore power to command what He pleases. The gospel is a law of liberty, but not a law of licentiousness (James 1:25). It frees us from the curse, but not from the commands, of the law. Look therefore to this royal law; expound it in your lives.

2. Let it be your rule for faith. The gospel is the only creed; he that believeth this is a true believer. As the Word—Christ—is the personal foundation, so the word of Christ is the doctrinal foundation for every Christian to build on (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

3. Make it your rule for worship. To serve God according to your own inventions, or men's prescriptions, is rebellion. As the moth eats out the garment, and the rust the iron, so doth an apocryphal worship in time eat out an evangelical worship (Matthew 15:7). All worship of God, without warrant, is like private coining money, high treason against the King of heaven (1 Kings 12:33). Till man can be his own maker, he may not be his own lawgiver (Isaiah 8:20).

4. In all things live by the gospel, and look to the gospel; let that be a light to your feet, and a lantern to your paths; keep the Word, and it will keep you, in an hour of temptation, from Binning, and in an hour of dissolution from sinking. The lawyer, in his doubts, consults with his Lyttleton or Coke; the physician prescribes by Galen or Hippocrates; the philosopher takes advice of his Aristotle; but the godly man must always take counsel of the gospel (Pr 4:26, 27).

### III. To be your buckler against opposition.

The gospel is a magazine, out of which Christians may be furnished with spiritual weapons in their holy war against the kingdom of darkness.

1. It is a shield against evil principles (Mt 22:29).

2. It is a shield against evil practices (Ps 119:9).

3. Doth Satan assault you? (Eph 6:17) Use the gospel for your defense.

4. Is the world to you a place of thorns and briars? (2 Corinthians 10:4.) Get your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and ye may walk comfortably through it.

### IV. To be your cordial in all afflictions

Seneca, going about to comfort his friend Polybius, persuades him to bear his affliction patiently, because he was Caesar's favorite. The word of grace affords you infinitely richer cordials, exceeding rich and precious promises, wherein ye are admitted to be the friends of God, the members of Christ, the temples of the Spirit, and the heirs of heaven.

## THE WORD OF HIS GRACE PRODUCES HOLY "EDIFICES"

**To build you up** (edify) (3618)(**oikodomeo** from **oikos** = dwelling + **doma** = building [of a house] from **demo** = to build) means literally to build, construct or erect a dwelling. **Oikodomeo** is used here as a metaphor meaning to build up, establish, confirm, edify.

As an aside all the NT uses of **oikodomeo** (and its derivatives) are metaphorical - for example as in this verse it means to "build up" in the sense of encouraging or strengthening one's faith is indicated (Acts 20:32; cp Col. 2: 7; Jude 1:20). In 1Co. 3:10f it means to means to "build upon," in the sense of developing and furthering one's Gospel ministry and in Eph 2:20 specifically speaks of the church "built on" the foundation of Christ and the apostles. The derivative **sunoikodomeo** signifies to "build together" in its only use in Eph. 2:22 where in the passive voice (action comes from without, i.e., by the Spirit) it indicates the continuing spiritual process of believers "being built together" into the community of God's people worldwide, joined together by the Spirit of God in Christ.

Webster says that **edify** is derived from the Latin **aedificare** to instruct or improve spiritually, in turn from Latin, to erect a house, in turn from **aedes** temple, house. What a picture of the power of Spirit saturated believers on their brethren.

**Related Resource: Alexander Maclaren's sermon Edification.**

**Guzik** comments that...

Programs can't do it; the spirit of the age can't do it; slick marketing can't do it; entertainment can't do it; only God and the Word of His grace



Other passages related to **edification** - Rom. 14:19 Rom. 15:2 1Cor. 8:1 1Cor. 14:4-5 1Cor. 14:12 1Cor. 14:17 2Cor. 10:8 2Cor. 13:10 Eph. 4:12 Eph. 4:16 Eph. 4:29 Col. 2:7 1Th 5:11 Jude 1:20.

In 1Pe 2:2 Peter makes it clear that failure to personally partake of pure milk of the Word will impede our spiritual growth. No Word, No growth. We will not be built up or edified. Are you in the Word daily and enabled by the Spirit obeying the Word you ingest?

**John Gill** writes that Christians may be said to be built up or **edified** when

additions are made to their grace or they grow in the exercise of it; when their spiritual strength increases, when their understandings are more enlightened, their judgments better informed, and their memories filled with divine truths and Gospel doctrines; when they are more and more confirmed in the faith of Christ, both as a grace, and as a doctrine; and their wills are brought to a greater resignation to the will of God, as well as their afflictions are set upon things in heaven, and their souls are more seeking after them (cf. Col 3:1, Col 3:2): and now this is what God is able to do, and does do; for except He builds, in vain do the builders build; He causes all grace to abound; and so does His Word, His essential Word; He is the author and finisher of faith (Heb 12:2), and gives both grace and glory (pS 84:11)

**To give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified** - What is able to give us the inheritance, to allow us to possess our possessions so to speak? The God of the Word and the Word of His grace, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is that simple. Why do we run hither and yon to this conference or that seminar and yet fail to run to the the Truth of God and His Word of grace? Our **inheritance** is an unmerited gift, a clear manifestation of God's grace. Outside of Christ in Adam we deserve hell, but when we are set apart (sanctified) in Christ, God gives us heaven!

**Ray Stedman** notes that in this section Paul states that there are four way to perform ministry...

(1) The first is by admonishing with tears, i.e., by "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), as he writes later to the Ephesians. I heard the other day of a certain church which had dismissed their pastor and gotten a new one. Someone asked why they had gotten rid of the old one. A spokesman said, "Because he kept telling the people they were going to hell." The questioner asked, "What does the new man say?" "Oh, he keeps telling them they're going to hell, too." "Well, what is the difference?" he was asked. He said, "The difference is that when the first one said it, he sounded as if he were glad of it. But when the second one says it, he lets you know that is breaking his heart." That is the difference the apostle is talking about -- admonishing with tears, not with harshness, not with judgment, but with concern and care and love, speaking the truth in love.

(2) The second way is to use the Word. "I commend you to the Word," he said. "You have all it takes in that. It is able to do what it was sent to do. It is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance provided for you, the inheritance of the saints in Jesus Christ -- all that Christ is, made available to you. The Word is able to lead you to that; now use it!" he says to these elders. It is able to build men up and to supply them with all that they lack.

(3) And thirdly, "Be selfless in your ministry," he says. "Do not be looking for something for yourself, do not be seeking glory for yourself, or favor, or position, or eminence or prominence or material reward. Look at me," he says. "I have labored among you and these hands have made tents to earn my necessities."

(4) Finally, "Remember that the Lord Jesus has said, 'It is better to give than to receive.' So labor hard in order that you may be able to give and thus to receive the better reward." ([Last Words](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** comments on the "building up" power of the **word of His grace**...

As for the individual, so for the Church, that written word is the guarantee for its purity and immortality. Christianity is the only religion that has ever passed through periods of decadence and purified itself again. They used to say that Thames water was the best to put on shipboard because, after it became putrid, it cleared itself and became sweet again. I do not know anything about whether that is true or not, but I know that it is true about Christianity. Over and over again it has rotted, and over and over again it has cleared itself, and it has always been by the one process. Men have gone back to the word and laid hold again of it in its simple omnipotence, and so a decadent Christianity has sprung up again into purity and power. The word of God, the principles of the revelation contained in Christ and recorded for ever in this New Testament, are the guarantee of the Church's immortality and of the Church's purity. This man and that man may fall away, provinces may be lost from the empire for a while, standards of rebellion and heresy may be lifted, but 'the foundation of God standeth sure,' and whoever will hark back again and dig down through the rubbish of human buildings to the living Rock will build secure and dwell at peace. If all our churches were pulverised to-morrow, and every formal creed of Christendom were torn in pieces, and all the institutions of the Church were annihilated-if there was a New Testament left they would all be built up again.

**Inheritance** (2817) (**kleronomia** from **kleros** = lot + **némo** = give or distribute) is literally that which is distributed by lot and so refers to a portion which one receives by lot in a general distribution and then, in a more general sense means to possess oneself of, to receive as one's own, to obtain. In other words it can refer to a property already received as well as one that is expected. Although **kleronomia** is an inheritance which one receives by lot, in the NT the idea of chance associated with the lot is not found.

**Kleronomia** refers to inheritance as a human legacy (cf. Mt 21:38; Mk 12: 7, 13; Lk 20:14; Acts 7: 5), to the inheritance of the land of Canaan as promised to Abraham (Heb. 11: 8). **Kleronomia** refers to the inheritance related to our salvation, an inheritance that is the lot of all who have been sanctified by God's grace and are true servants of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 20:32; Col. 3:24), an inheritance that believers receive not through the law, but by grace (a promise - Gal. 3:18), an eternal inheritance made certain by the work of Christ our Mediatorial High Priest under the New Covenant (Heb 9:15), an inheritance which is imperishable, etc (1Pe 1:4), an inheritance guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:14, Eph 1:18), an inheritance that will not be the lot of the idolatrous or immoral (Eph 5: 5).

**Related Resource:** [Dictionary discussion of Inheritance](#)

**Joe Wall** writes that "A primary contribution to the believer's preparation for receiving eternal inheritances, Paul told the Ephesian elders, was the **"word of His grace, which is able to build you up"**, a reference, apparently, to the wonderful grace teaching of the Inherit the kingdom of God. ([Going for the Gold - Joe L Wall](#))

### **POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION = PAST TENSE SALVATION = JUSTIFICATION**

**Sanctified** (37) (**hagiazō** from **hagios** = holy, set apart) means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of **koinos**, which means profane or common. The primary meaning of sanctify is "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the consecrated.

For clarification, keep in mind that in the NT **hagiazō** has 3 distinct shades of meaning:

(1) Describing the action of dedicating or consecrating something or someone to the service of God (Mt 23:19, 1Ti 4:5, Acts 26:18, 1Co 7:14, Heb 9:13), (2) to treat as holy, as is commanded regarding our Father's Name ("Hallowed" = **hagiazō** - Mt 6:9-note) and His Son's Lordship (1Pe 3:15-note), and (3) to cause someone to have the quality of holiness, as Paul prays for the saints at Thessalonica (1Th 5:23-note) and John's prayer for the holy to still be holy (Rev 22:11-note).

**Sanctify** is in the **perfect tense** which speaks something occurring in the past but have permanent effects. This tense indicates not only that sanctification is a state of being that is a result of salvation, but in the **passive voice** signifies that it is something that God does for the believer at the time of conversion. In other words God sets the believer apart from darkness to light, from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of God, ultimately setting him or her apart for Himself, to be eternally be His treasured possession! Amazing grace indeed! This is called by some "positional sanctification." This one act of sanctification is made possible through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

To put it another way, in Acts 20:32, Paul is describing **past tense salvation (justification)**, at which time the Spirit set the elders apart from the world and unto God. They were "common" or "profane" when they were unregenerate sinners still **in Adam**. But when the supernatural power of the Gospel brought about their new birth, they were transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (**in Christ**), and what had been profane or common, was miraculously made "holy." God took **sinners** and made them into **saints**. Yes, saved sinners still can sin but that is not the **general direction** of their life. Once **justified** (a once for all time transaction), saints begin the life long journey of **progressive sanctification** (present tense salvation) by the same Spirit that set them apart at the time of justification (1Pe 1:2-note, 2Th 2:13, Acts 26:18 = "have been sanctified by faith in Me [Jesus]" = justification by grace through faith, which is also described in Heb 10:10-note = Have been sanctified").

See similar uses of **hagiazō** (and related word - **hagiasmos**) referring to **past tense salvation** (justification = "positional sanctification") - Ro 15:16-note; 1Cor 1:2; 1:30 [hagiasmos]; 1Cor 6:11; 7:14; Eph. 5:26-note; 1Th 5:23-note; 2Th. 2:13 [hagiasmos]; 1Ti 4:5; 2Ti 2:21-note)

As **Lewis S. Chafer** says...

**Positional sanctification** is as perfect as He is perfect. It is as complete for the weakest saint as it is for the strongest. It depends only on one's union with and position in Christ. All believers, not only some, are classified as 'the saints'.

## Related Resource: Three Tenses of Salvation

Wuest writes that **hagiazo** does not mean...

merely "to set apart," but in the case of the pagan word, "to set apart for the gods," and in the case of the Christian word "to set apart for God."

The worshipper of the pagan god acquired the character of that pagan god and the religious ceremonies connected with its worship.

The Greek temple at Corinth housed a large number of harlots who were connected with the worship of the Greek god. Thus, the *set-apartness* of the Greek worshipper was in character licentious, totally depraved, and sinful!

The believer in the Lord Jesus is set apart for God by the Holy Spirit, out of the First Adam with the latter's sin and condemnation, into the Last Adam with the latter's righteousness and life (cf 1Cor 15:22,45). Thus, the worshipper of the God of the Bible partakes of the character of the God for Whom he is set apart. This is **positional sanctification**, (**Ed**: justification) an act of God performed at the moment a sinner puts his faith in the Lord Jesus (1Cor 1:2). The work of the **Holy Spirit** in the yielded saint, in which He sets the believer apart for God in his experience, by eliminating sin from his life and producing His fruit (cf Gal 5:22-note; Gal 5:23-note), a process which goes on constantly throughout the believer's life, is called **progressive sanctification** (1Thes 5:23-note). ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Eerdmans or Logos](#))

Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes: **arguriou e chrusiou e himatismou oudenos epethumesa: (1SAAI)**

- Nu 16:15 1Sa 12:3-5 1Co 9:12,15,18 2Co 7:2 11:9 12:14,17 1Pe 5:2)

## FREEDOM FROM SELF INTEREST

Paul is alluding to another danger for spiritual leaders, the possibility that they might misuse their position for personal gain, focusing on self not others, focused on getting instead of giving! He addresses it head on by giving them his example to imitate, for he imitated Jesus' attitude towards money and possessions (1Cor 11:1). Paul's attitude toward silver, gold or possessions was in stark contrast to the investment some Ephesians had formerly made in their books on magic (Acts 19:19). His attitude also contrasted with that of the purveyors of artifacts associated with the cult of Artemis (Acts 19:24-27).

**I have coveted no one's silver** - Paul did not desire earthly wealth. He had not lived among the Ephesians in order to obtain their property (cp similar disclaimer in 2Cor 12:14). Paul had set his mind on the things above and not those on the earth (Col 3:2). It is worth noting that Paul could have demanded support from the saints at Ephesus (read 1Cor 9:13-14), but he refused to do so (1Cor 9:12).

## Much trouble is caused by our yearnings getting ahead of our earnings!

**I have coveted** (1937)(**epithumeo** from **epí** = upon, used intensively + **thumós** = passion) (See also noun **epithumia**) means literally to fix the desire upon (object could be good [Mt 13:17, Lk 22:15 used of Jesus] or bad [1Co 10:6]). **Epithumeo** means to have a strong desire to do or secure something. Note that the preposition **epi** can express motion toward or upon and thus one lexicon defines it as to set one's heart upon. In sum, **epithumeo** describes a strong impulse toward something so that one's passions or affections are directed toward some object, thing or person.

Paul's had written similar words to the saints at Thessalonica emphasizing that he had never been interested in financial gain in the ministry...

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with **apretext** (purpose or motive alleged or an appearance assumed in order to cloak the real intention or state of affairs; pretext suggests subterfuge and the offering of false reasons or motives in excuse or explanation, e.g., a pretext to get out of work) for greed—God is witness (1Th 2:5-note)

**Guzik** - Paul concludes by trying to communicate his heart, his motive in ministry. He wasn't in it for himself, but for God's glory and for the building up of God's people.

Puritan writer **Thomas Watson** said...

A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for getting **earth** than for getting **heaven**. (Ed: Contrast Paul's command to Spirit filled saints - Col 3:2-note, Col 3:3-note!)...Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately, which is a key that opens the door to all sin....There is no better antidote against coveting than which is another's than being content with that which is our own.

**Matthew Henry** reminds us that...

Covetousness is commonly a master-sin and has the command of other lusts.... Covetousness is spiritual idolatry; it is the giving of that love and regard to worldly wealth which are due to God only....He is much happier that is always content, though he has ever so little, than he that is always coveting, though he has ever so much...Poor people are as much in danger from an inordinate desire towards the wealth of the world as rich people from an inordinate delight in it.

**Barnes** comments on the mention of clothes (raiment), noting that...

Changes of raiment among the ancients, as at present among the Orientals, constituted an important part of their property. (Barnes notes on Mt 6:19 [my note] have the following comment) Treasures, or wealth, among the ancients, consisted in clothes or changes of raiment, as well as in gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. It meant an abundance of anything that was held to be conducive to the ornament or comfort of life. As the Orientals delighted much in display, in splendid equipage, and costly garments, their treasures, in fact, consisted much in beautiful and richly-ornamented articles of apparel. See Ge 45:22, where Joseph gave to his brethren changes of raiment; Jos 7:21, where Achan coveted and secreted a goodly Babylonish garment. Compare also Jdg 14:12.

**Seeking empties a life;  
giving fills it.**

**Steven Cole** notes that...

Greed is always easy to recognize in others: They won't share what they have with me! But it's not so easy to spot it in ourselves. Charles Simeon, in a sermon on Luke 12:15 ([Caution Against Covetousness](#)), developed three criteria to judge whether we are under the influence of greed. He said that we should examine the manner in which we seek material things; the degree to which we enjoy them; and, the manner in which we mourn or are anxious when we lose them. Givers are blessed because they are freed from this sin that brings both temporal and eternal destruction. ([Sermon](#))

**Acts 20:34** "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me:[autoi ginoskete](#) (2PPAI) [oti tais chreiais mou kai tois ousin](#) (PAPMPD) [met' hemou huperetesan](#) (3PAAI) [ai cheires autai](#)."

**You yourselves** - The pronoun **you** serves to intensify Paul's following claim. The elders had personal, intimate knowledge of the truth of what he was saying. As **A T Robertson** says "Certainly they knew that the church in Ephesus had not supported Paul while there."

**Know** (1097) ([ginosko](#)) describes knowledge gained by experience or by an active relationship between the one who knows (the elders) and the person known (Paul). The elders could testify from experience that Paul provided for his needs (he was a tentmaker).

**These hands** (Acts 18:3 1Co 4:12 1Th 2:9 2Th 3:8,9) - **NET Bible** adds "these hands of mine" where the phrase "of mine" not in Greek but added to make clear that Paul is referring to his own hands, a reference to his toil as a tent maker at Thessalonica and Corinth. The point is that Paul did not consider himself too "good" to perform mundane tasks involved in manual labor.

**Furneaux** imagines that Paul must have held out his hands for the elders to see to emphasize his point, adding "As he held them up, they saw a tongue of truth in every seam that marked them." ([Acts 20:28-38 Commentary](#)).

**Ministered** ([5256](#))(**hupereteo** from **huperetes** = an attendant or assistant <> from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower = an "under rower" ~ a subordinate who waits to carry out a superior's commands) means to serve as a rower (see **huperetes** below), to do service on board the ship and then came mean simply to serve, render service or assistance or be helpful to someone.

In secular Greek usage the **huperetes** (Mt 5:25, 26:58; Mk 14:54, 65; Jn 7:32, 45, 46; 18:3, 12, 18, 22; 19:6; Acts 5:22, 26) referred to common sailors (distinguished from **nautes** = seaman) who were down in the ship's, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "Row, Row, Row!"

The verb **hupereteo** occurs 3 times in the NT and below are the other two uses...

Acts 13:36 "For David, after he **had served** the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

Acts 20:23 Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from **ministering** to him.

**Barnes** has a pithy comment...

How much more influence will such a man have than he who has been worldly-minded; he who has sought to become rich; and he, the only memorial of whose life is, that he has sought "the fleece, not the flock"—that he has gained the property, not the souls of men.

**Needs** ([5532](#))(**chreia** from **chraomai** = to use, make use of or **chreos** = a debt) means a necessity, what is needed or the occasion of need. Clearly Paul's tent making business brought in a good income, a testimony to the ability of his (our) God to supply for our needs. See Paul's encouragement to the saints at Philippi (Php 4:19-note) - See **Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide**.

**And to the men who were with me** - To whom does this refer? Some commentaries surmise Aquila and Priscilla.

**MacArthur** makes the point that...

Although Paul had every right to receive support for his ministry (1Cor 9:3ff.) and sometimes did (2Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 4:10-19), it was his custom to support himself (2 Cor. 11:7; 12:13; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8). He did so that he might "offer the gospel without charge" (1Cor 9:18).

Acts 20:35 "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.'": [panta](#) hupedeica (1SAAI) [umin](#) [oti](#) [outos](#) [kopiontas](#) (PAPMPA) [dei](#) (3SPAI) [antilambanesthai](#) (PMN) [ton](#) [asthenounton](#), (PAPMPG) [mnemoneuein](#) (PAN) [te](#) [ton](#) [logon](#) [tou](#) [kuriou](#) [lesou](#) [oti](#) [autos](#) [eipen](#), (3SAAI) [Makarion](#) [estin](#) (3SPAI) [mallon](#) [didonai](#) (PAN) [e](#) [lambanein](#). (PAN) :

- **showed**: Ac 20:20,27
- **that**: Isa 35:3 Ro 15:1 1Co 9:12 2Co 11:9,12, 12:13 Eph 4:28 1Th 4:11 1Th 5:14 Heb 12:12,13, 13:3
- **It is**: Ps 41:1-3 112:5-9 Pr 19:17 Isa 32:8 58:7-12 Mt 10:8 25:34-40 Luke 14:12-14 2Co 8:9 9:6-12 Php 4:17-20 Heb 13:16)

## AN EXAMPLE TO IMITATE

**In everything** - All the things Paul did by word and deed while he was among the saints at Ephesus.

Paul commanded the saints at Corinth (and by application ALL disciples):

**Be** ([present imperative](#) - make this your daily practice - be careful - the only way to do this is by jettisoning self reliance and relying wholly on the Holy Spirit! Successful obedience to supernatural commands call for continual reliance on supernatural enablement!) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1-[note](#))

**I showed you** ([5263](#))(**hupodeiknumi** from **hupó** = under + **deiknuo** = show, make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means) literally means to show by placing under (as under one's gaze or before one's eyes) and so to show or instruct plainly, to set before one's eyes, to exemplify by words or actions. The idea is to direct someone's attention to something and so to point out or make known. In some context the idea is to warn (Mt 3:7, Lk 3:7, 12:5) Note that some lexicons state that the original meaning is to show secretly (Liddell-Scott).

**Marvin Vincent** says **hupodeiknumi**...

means to **show by example**. Thus, Luke 6:47, "I will show you to whom he is like," is followed by the illustration of the man who built upon the rock. So Acts 9:16. God will show Paul by practical experience how great things he must suffer. The kindred noun **hupodeigma** is always rendered example or pattern. See John 13:15; Jas. 5:10, etc.; and note on 2Pe 2:6. -- In all things I gave you an example.

By Paul's 3 plus years of **teaching** and **conduct**, he had clearly demonstrated his practice of **working hard**. What Paul *said* was fully substantiated by what he *did*, and it . This is integrity - when one's *life* matches one's *lips*.

#### **Related Resources: A Few Thought on Integrity; Word Study on Sincere**

The **NAS** translates **hupodeiknumi** as show(2), showed(1), warn(1), warned(2).

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who **warned** you to flee from the wrath to come?

Luke 3:7 So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who **warned** you to flee from the wrath to come?

Luke 6:47 "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will **show** you whom he is like:

Luke 12:5 "But I will **warn** you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Acts 9:16 for I (Jesus) will **show** him (Paul) how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 20:35 "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.'"

**Hupodeiknumi** - 23x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - 1Chr 28:18; 2Chr 15:3; 20:2; Esther 1:1; 2:10, 20; 3:4; 4:7; 5:11; 8:1; Jer 31:19; Dan 2:17; 4:1, 8; 5:7, 9, 12, 16; 9:22f; 10:14, 21; 11:2

**Working Hard** (2872)(**kopiao** from **kopos** = labor, fatigue) The root word **kopos** is used in secular Greek of "a beating," "weariness" (as though one had been beaten) and "**exertion**," was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work, exertion or heat. **Kopiao** means to to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion. To become physically worn out, weary or faint. **Kopiao** can also convey that the hard work may include difficulty and trouble. Paul uses the **present tense** which pictures continual wearying work! He was ever a man on mission, redeeming the short time he had be allotted because he knew the days were evil (Eph 5:16-note). And remember that all believers are commanded to continually imitate his example even as he imitated his Lord (1Cor 11:1).

Acts 18:2-3 (At Corinth) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade (**tentmaker**), he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were **tent-makers**.

1Thess 2:9-note (At Thessalonica) For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

**You must help the weak** - Take up the cause of the weak, presumably the "economically" weak and the physically weak who are unable to work. Notice how this passage supports his earlier statement that he had not coveted riches (Acts 20:33).

Paul's ministry was exemplary in every respect and set the bar high not only for the shepherds (elders) but the sheep. You may be a sheep, but you are still leaving an example for someone, influencing them by your words and deeds. Are you being careful how you conduct yourself? What is the "Gospel" according to your life?

**Barnes** comments...

To provide for the wants of the sick and feeble members of the flock, who are unable to labour for themselves. The weak here denote the poor, the needy, the infirm.

**Must** (present tense = speaks of a continual obligation) (1163)(**dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place.

**Help** (482)(**antilambano** from **antí** = mutually or against + **lambáno** = to take, to hold) means to take hold of another as by the hand. Figuratively **antilambano** meant to support from falling as if taking them by the hand to help, support or assist them. To come



to the aid of.

**Antilambano** in 1Ti 6:2 has another meaning -- "to give or commit oneself wholeheartedly to something" or "to experience the benefit from someone" (Louw-Nida). "to commit oneself wholeheartedly to something, take part in, devote oneself to, practice" (BDAG). Friberg says antilambano in 1Ti 6:2 probably means "benefit from, receive benefit from something" or less likely "devote oneself to something" (Friberg)

**Marvin Vincent** - The verb means to lay hold on: thence to grasp helpfully or to help. To lay hold in the sense of partaking (1Ti 6:2), carries us back to the primitive meaning of the word according to its composition: to receive instead of, or in return (*anti*), and suggests the old phrase to take up for, espouse the cause of. Wycliffe's Version of the NT, has took up, but probably not in this sense.

**Antilambano** - 3x in NAS - here are the other two uses...

Luke 1:54 "He has **given help** to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,

1 Timothy 6:2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who **partake** of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

**Antilambano** - 55x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Gen 48:17; Lev 25:35; 1Kgs 9:9, 11; 1Chr 22:17; 2Chr 7:22; 28:15, 23; 29:34; Ps 3:5; 18:35; 20:2; 40:11; 41:12; 48:3; 63:8; 69:29; 89:43; 107:17; 118:13; 119:116; 139:13; Pr 11:28; Isa 9:7; 26:3; 41:9; 42:1; 49:26; 51:18; 59:16; 63:5; 64:7; Jer 23:14; Ezek 12:14; 16:49; 20:5f; Dan 6:27; Mic 6:6;

**Weak** (770)(**astheneo** from **asthenes** [see study] = without strength, powerless from **a** = without + **sthenos** = strength, bodily vigor) means to be feeble (in any sense), to be diseased, impotent, sick, to lack strength, to be infirm, to be weak. Figuratively **astheneo** can refer to incapability of any kind.

**Astheneo** has three main senses (1) Be sick, (2) be weak, (3) be in need. **Paul's** use of the **present tense** suggests these individuals are chronically incapacitated.

**Remember the words of the Lord Jesus** - Always a good exhortation! Barnes adds that the idea is "To call to mind for encouragement, and with the force of a command."

**Remember** (present tense = continually recall) (3421)(mnemoneuo (**mnemoneuo** from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means to exercise memory, call something to mind, recollect, to pay attention to something.

**Webster's 1828** definition of **remember** - To have in the mind an idea which had been in the mind before, and which recurs to the mind without effort (**Ed comment**: I think in the NT sense we often need to make a conscious effort, a volitional choice to remember. And we have the Spirit to aid our recall - cp Jn 14:26, 1Co 2:12, 13). When we use effort to recall an idea, we are said to recollect it. This distinction is not always observed. Hence remember is often used as synonymous with recollect, that is, to call to mind. We say, we cannot remember a fact, when we mean, we cannot recollect it. ([Click for all 15 definitions of remember](#))

## GIVING LIKE GOD!

**He Himself said "It is more blessed to give than to receive"** - This specific saying is not recorded in the Gospels. Note that Jesus is not saying that the recipients of another's generosity are less blessed! Indeed they are! Note also that Paul is not advocating that we be great givers in order to curry favor with our Father or even worse to try to barter our way into heaven. The Father is satisfied (**propitiated**) only with the greatest gift of His Son's sacrificial death.

As **Steven Cole** emphasizes...

Before you can give anything that pleases God, you must first receive God's **free gift** of eternal life (Ro 5:15-note, Ro 5:16-note, Ro 6:23-note, Ro 3:24-note). You must come to God as a poor sinner, unable to pay the debt that you owe, and receive the forgiveness that He has provided freely for you, but at great cost to Himself. Jesus' death is the only satisfaction for our sins before the holy God. He offers this unspeakable gift to everyone who will receive it (Jn 1:11, 12, 13). **Receiving God's salvation in Christ is the starting point for becoming a giver, because it is the starting point of being conformed in your character to the Lord Jesus.** Thus if we are becoming givers, although we can never match what Jesus did or even think of paying Him back, we are being more conformed to His image (Ro 8:29-note), and we will be blessed (Ed: E.g., see Lk 14:13-14, Jas 1:25-note)....

(Cole continues with a story of the) late billionaire J. Paul Getty had payphones installed in his mansion for his house guests to use, because he didn't want to pay for their long distance calls! Needless to say, those guests were not there because of the warm feelings that they had for J. Paul Getty! Stingy, greedy people cut themselves off from close relationships with others. Think of how greed has often divided family members from one another because they think that they are not getting their fair share of the inheritance of a departed "loved one," who was not very loved! Greed destroys close relationships, but givers know the joy of deep and enduring relationships with others.

Givers are invariably people of faith, because you have to trust in God to give away money that you easily could spend on yourself. People of faith are people of prayer, because it is through prayer that we receive from God's bountiful supply. So it was fitting that Paul knelt down with these men and prayed with them before he got on board the ship. He probably prayed that God would keep them from false teachers, that each man would be a godly example to the flock, and that through them the church would be built up and expand all over Asia. And he probably prayed that God would meet their needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19-note). These men grieved at the thought of never seeing Paul again, because they knew that this generous man loved them, and they loved him.

So givers are blessed because they are freed from the destructive sin of greed; they are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; and, they have deep and enduring relationships with others. But there is a fourth reason that givers are blessed. It is not explicit in our text, although it is implicit here and explicit elsewhere - Givers are blessed because they will reap eternal rewards....those who have received God's gift of eternal life will reap rewards in heaven in proportion to their stewardship of money in this life. Unlike our investments in this uncertain world, that can be lost in a market crash, our investments in heaven are secure from every source of loss (See 1Ti 6:17-19)...How can you put a price on an investment that yields eternal dividends? If you give to further the Lord's work, you will someday be welcomed into eternal dwellings by many friends who are there because you gave (Luke 16:1-9).

Years ago, a lady was filling a box for missionaries in India. A child came to her door to give her a penny, all that the child had, to be used for the Lord. With this coin, the missionary bought a tract and put it into the box. Eventually, this gospel leaflet came into the hands of a Burmese chief, and God used it to bring him to salvation. The chief told the story of his conversion to his friends, and many of them believed in Christ and threw away their idols. They built a church there, sent out a missionary, and at least 1,500 natives were converted. All this, and probably more, resulted from a little girl's gift of one penny for Jesus ("Our Daily Bread," 12/70). ([Sermon](#))

The essence of Paul's quote from Jesus is implied by Christ in a general sense in the following passages...

Luke 6:38 **"Give, and it will be given to you;** good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Mt 10:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; **freely you received, freely give.**

**NET Bible note comment:** The saying (*more blessed to give...*) is similar to Mt 10:8. Service and generosity should be abundant. Interestingly, these exact words are not found in the gospels. Paul must have known of this saying from some other source.

**Guzik** comments...

His parting words, taken from a quote of Jesus' unrecorded in the gospels, are perfect for all who would minister to God's people: It is more blessed to give than to receive. Ministers must be more concerned about what they can give their flock than concerned about what their flock can give them. This is the best beatitude of all. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us how to be blessed; here, He tells us how to be more blessed! It should not stumble us to consider that Jesus taught many things unrecorded in the gospels; John said as much in Jn 21:25. But we can trust that God has preserved all that is necessary of the teaching of Jesus.

**Brian Bell...**

More blessed it is, because it is more God-like; It is more fruitful; It is the consequence & consummation of receiving. ([Sermon Notes](#))

**David G Peterson** sums up this section noting that Paul's...

letters encourage believers to finance gospel ministry (1 Cor. 9:13-14; Gal. 6:6), and he himself accepted gifts

from some churches (Phil. 4:10-19), but not others (1 Cor. 9:6-18; 2 Cor. 11:7-11; 12:16-18). However, his aim here is to warn leaders of the dangers inherent in their position and to commend his own solution to the problem of greed. Covetousness spoils relationships and hinders the work of the gospel, since those who are seeking to advance themselves materially will be tempted to evaluate their contacts and ministry opportunities in economic terms. ([Acts of the Apostles Pillar New Testament Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** tells this story...

Early one morning years ago an American serviceman was making his way back to the barracks in London. He saw a little boy with his nose pressed to the window of a bakery, staring in silence. The serviceman's heart went out to the little boy, probably an orphan. "Son, would you like some of those?" "Oh, yeah, I would!" The serviceman stepped inside and bought a dozen. He took the bag outside to the boy and said, "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He heard the child ask quietly, "Mister, are you God?" When we give, we act as God does. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ..." (John 3:16). As God's people, we should be givers, not only at the Christmas season, but as a way of life. ([Sermon](#))

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**IS IT BLESSED TO RECEIVE?** - We admire people who take responsibility for their lives and try not to burden others. Such self-sufficiency is commendable. But if every needy person in the world --and that includes all of us at one time or another--refused help, there would be no opportunity for anyone to give.

When we read Jesus' statement in Acts 20:35 that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," we tend to focus only on the virtue of giving. Our Lord did not say that it's undesirable to accept a gift, but that by comparison our goal should be to give, not to get. Actually, both giving and receiving are commendable, enriching, and even necessary.

Perhaps it's risky in a greedy age to extol receiving. Yet many sincere, well-meaning people hesitate when offered this lesser but equally valid blessing. They say, "Oh, I can't take that!" or "You really shouldn't."

Why are we like this? Personally, I've concluded that it's often because I don't want to feel indebted to others, or I'm proud, or I want to have control. But these hidden attitudes are selfish and run contrary to the spirit of Him who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Perhaps we need to give others the blessing of giving by learning to be a gracious receiver. - Dennis J. De Haan

I gave out of abundant pride  
And blessing took its leave,  
Till humbly to the Lord I cried,  
And learned how to receive.

**Grateful receiving, like gracious giving  
comes from the heart.**

**Acts 20:36** When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. [Kai tauta eipon \(AAPMSN\) theis \(AAPMSN\) ta gonata autou sun pasin autois](#) proseucato.(3SAMI):

- **Knelt:** Ac 7:60 21:5 2Ch 6:13 Da 6:10 Luke 22:41 Eph 3:14 Php 4:6

**When he had said these things** - In a sense Paul seals his last words with a final offering to God, a good pattern for times of meeting with our brethren. Do you pray before your brethren depart?

## **PRAYER POSTURE**

**Knelt down** - This description of the posture of prayer is interesting in light of the fact that pious Jews would pray standing (Mt 6:5-note, Mt 11:25, Lk 18:11, 13, Ps 134:1, NAS has "serve" but ESV & KJV are better = "stand" which is also "stand" in Lxx, Ps 135:2). One pious Jew however gave us an example to follow in His steps (1Peter 2:21-note), by **kneeling** in [Gethsemane](#) (Luke 22:41).

## Barnes comments...

The usual attitude of prayer. It is the proper posture of a suppliant. It indicates reverence and humility; and is represented in the Scriptures as the usual attitude of devotion, 2 Ch. 6:13; Da. 6:10; Lu. 22:41; Ac. 7:60; 9:40; 21:5; Ro. 11:4; Phi. 2:10; Ep. 3:14; Mk. 1:40.

**Acts 20:37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,:** [hikanos de klauthmos egeneto \(3SAMI\) panton, kai epipesontes \(AAPMPN\) epi ton trachelon tou Paulou katephiloun \(3PIAI\) auton.](#):

- **Weep aloud:** 1Sa 20:41 2Sa 15:30 2Ki 20:3 Ezr 10:1 Job 2:12 Ps 126:5 2Ti 1:4 Rev 7:17 21:4
- **embraced:** Ge 45:14, 46:29
- **kissed:** Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12, 1Th 5:26)20:31

**Young's Literal** - and there came a great weeping to all, and having fallen upon the neck of Paul, they were kissing him

**Frank Allen** - As in the case of Paul and the Ephesian elders, tears may sometimes dim our eyes, but Oh! how much better it is to have our eyes dimmed with tears than to have our hearts remain cold with neglect and sin! ([The Acts of the Apostles](#))

**Embraced Paul** - They "fell on his neck" and repeatedly kissed him, as Middle Eastern men do to this day when greeting one another. This scene indicates a deep and tender mutual brotherly love, similar to the scene in Ge 46:29 when Joseph met his aged father Jacob after years of separation.

**Brian Bell** - It takes a minute to say hello and forever to say goodbye! How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard. - Carol Sobieski and Thomas Meehan, Annie ([Sermon Notes](#))

**Kissed (2705)** (**kataphileo** from **kata** = intensifies the verb + **phileo** = to love, kiss, cp philos = loved, dear, friend) means to kiss fervently, eagerly . **Liddell Scott** says "to kiss tenderly, to caress, Xen."

**Paul** uses the **imperfect tense** which vividly pictures the elders as over and over ("repeatedly") demonstrating their fond affection to their beloved teacher and friend. What a contrast with the wicked kiss of Judas to one he hailed as Rabbi (but not as friend)! Compare the similar use of a deceptively "affectionate" treacherous kiss in 2Sa 20:9,10!

## Vine comments...

the stronger force of this verb (**phileo**) has been called in question, but the change from phileo to Kataphileo in Matt. 26:49 and Mark 14:45 can scarcely be without significance, and the act of the traitor was almost certainly more demonstrative than the simple kiss of salutation. So with the kiss of genuine devotion, Luke 7:38, 45; 15:20; Acts 20:37, in each of which this verb is used.

## Vincent notes...

The compound verb has the force of an emphatic, ostentatious salute. Meyer says embraced and kissed. The same word is used of the tender caressing of the Lord's feet by the woman in the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:38), of the father's embrace of the returned prodigal (Luke 15:20), and of the farewell of the Ephesian elders to Paul (Acts 20:37).

## Kataphileo - 6x in 6v -

Matthew 26:49 Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and **kissed** Him.

Mark 14:45 After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and **kissed** Him.

Luke 7:38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and **kissing** His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

Luke 7:45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to **kiss** My feet.

Luke 15:20 "So he (**the prodigal son**) got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and **kissed** him.

Acts 20:37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and **repeatedly kissed** him,

**Kataphileo** - 14x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Gen 31:28, 55; 45:15; Ex 4:27; Ruth 1:9, Ru 1:14-note; 1Sa 20:41; 2Sa 14:33;

15:5; 19:39; 2Sa 20:9; 1Kgs 2:19; 19:20; Ps 85:10;

The psalmist writes...

Ps 85:10-[see Spurgeon's lengthy note](#) Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have **kissed** each other.

The use of **Kataphileo** in Ruth especially pictures the tender affection expressed in this verb...

Ruth 1:9-note (Naomi to Ruth and Orpah - encouraging them to return to Moab - a heart wrenching moment)  
"May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she **kissed** (kataphileo) them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Acts 20:38 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: [odunomenoi \(PPMPN\)](#) [malista epi to logo o eirekei \(3SPLUPERFECTAI\)](#) [oti ouketi mellousin \(3PPAI\)](#) [to prosopon autou theorein. \(PAN\)](#) [proepempon \(3PIAI\)](#) [de auton eis to ploion. :](#)

- That they would not see: Ac 20:25
- And they were accompanying him: Ac 15:3 21:5,16 1Co 16:11)

**Grieving** (present tense = continual grieving)([3600](#))(**odunao** from **odune** = sorrow, torment, grief, pain) means actively to cause intense pain but is used only passively in the NT to describe experiencing (suffering) intense physical pain (Lk 16:24 = Hades) or to experience mental and/or spiritual pain manifest by being grieved, anxious, very worried, deeply distressed.

The NAS translates **odunao** - agony(1), am in agony(1), anxiously(1), grieving(1) and the KJV as sorrow 2, torment 2.

**Odunao** - only 4x in Scripture

Luke 2:48 When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been **anxiously** looking for You."

Luke 16:24 "And he (Lazarus) cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in **agony** in this flame.'

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

Acts 20:38 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.

**H C Trumbull...**

It is the measure of hope which gives joy or sorrow to a parting. To part with a loved one in the morning, in the confident expectation of meeting again at the day's close, hardly causes a twinge of sorrow to the most sensitive heart. A parting which looks forward to a reunion at the close of a summer's vacation, or of a European tour, or on the return of an anniversary gathering, has more of brightness than of shadow in its firmament. But when the parting is with a soldier son or brother, who is starting out for active service at the front; or with a missionary worker who leaves his country with no thought of a return to it; or, when for any reason the hope of another meeting in this life is faint or is lacking—then its sadness is intensified. So it is when the parting is at the grave's border. Even the brightest-hearted Christian has a right to have sorrow in parting with a loved friend, with no hope of seeing him again on earth. It is not that the friend is a loser by passing out from earth's prison house; but it is that he who remains here shall see that friend's face no more. But even in such a parting, believers in Christ can have hope of a meeting beyond the grave; and this hope it is which should encourage the believer to sorrow not as those who have no hope. (Biblical Illustrator).

**Word** ([3056](#))(**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words.

**See his face again** - "to see his face" (an idiom for seeing someone in person)." (NET Bible Note)

**See** ([2334](#))(**theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; **cptheoros** = a spectator) (Gives us English = theater, theorize) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and

understanding. It means to gaze, to look with interest and purpose, to carefully examine with emphasis on or attention to details. To behold intensely or attentively. Our English word *scrutinize* conveys this sense, for it means to examine closely and minutely. To be a spectator and thus to understand or perceive. To contemplate (Heb 13:7). **Theoreo** in some contexts can include the idea of to behold with amazement. For example, in Mark 5:15 **theoreo** is not translated merely "see" but "observe" for as **Vincent** explains...

(theoreo) was more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently. (**Ed Note:** And even with a sense of amazement.)

**Summary** (from BDAG and other sources)...

**(1) To observe something with sustained attention, be a spectator**-- look at, observe, perceive, see (with physical eyes), "to observe something with continuity and attention, often with the implication that what is observed is something unusual" (Louw Nida) (Acts 7:56, Mark 16:14) This sense denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. E.g., in Jn1:14 **beheld** implies that Jesus' stay upon earth though brief, was such that his followers could calmly and leisurely contemplate His glory. In the Septuagint **theoreo** in Ps 66:18 describes the object of the contemplation as wickedness ("**regard** wickedness"). Rapt contemplation of a vision as in Jn 2:23 where they were **beholding** His signs.

The idea of **theoreo** is not that of an indifferent spectator, but one who deliberately contemplates, one who looks at with interest and attention and even with a critical, discriminating inspection.

**(2) To come to the understanding of something** - To notice, perceive, observe, find (Acts 17:22); "to come to understand as the result of perception—"to understand, to perceive, to see, to recognize." (Heb 7:4, Ro 7:23, Jas 2:24) (**Vincent** says **theoreo** in 1Jn 3:17 where on "**sees** his brother in need" is better rendered "deliberately contemplates")

**Theoreo** means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object with view to search into and understand and thus to look inquiringly and intently. E.g., in Mk 5:15 they **observed** the man who had been demon-possessed.

a. esp. on the basis of what one has seen and heard (Acts 4:13, Jn 4:19)

b. of the spiritual perception of the one sent by God, which is possible only to the believer (Jn 14:17, 14:19b)

c. Figurative extension of seeing meaning to undergo or experience (Jn 8:51)

**Wuest** on **theaomai**...

(Comment on Mk 3:11) It is used primarily, not of an indifferent spectator, but of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose. It would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army, while **theaomai** would be used of a civilian looking at the parade. **Theōreō** would include within its meaning a critical, understanding investigation, while **theaomai** would speak of the mere registering of impressions. The demons exhibited interest and purpose in their critical observation of the Lord Jesus. They looked at Him with a practiced eye, long used to the measuring of the good and the true as exhibited in the character of God. They recognized in Him the embodiment of the holiness out from the presence of which they were driven when the angel Lucifer fell and became Satan, in whose fall they shared because they followed him in his rebellion against the Most High.

**Vincent** on **theaomai** in Luke 10:18

The verb denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. So John 1:14, we beheld, implying that Jesus' stay upon earth, though brief, was such that his followers could calmly and leisurely contemplate his glory. Compare John 2:23: "they beheld (**theaomai**) his miracles," thoughtfully and attentively. Here it denotes the rapt contemplation of a vision.

**Vincent** describes the difference between **theaomai** and **theoreo**...

Both **theoreo** imply deliberate contemplation, but the former is gazing with a view to satisfy the eye, while the latter is beholding more critically, with an inward spiritual or mental interest in the thing beheld, and with a view to acquire knowledge about it. "**Theoreo** would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army; **theaomai** of a lay spectator looking at the parade" (Thayer).

**Vine** adds that ...



The difference between this verb and **blepo** and **horao** (= "see" of bodily vision) is brought out in John 20:5,6,8; in Jn 20:5 **blepo** is used of John's sight of the linen cloths in the tomb, without his entering in; he "saw" at a glance the Lord was not there; in Jn 20:6 **the closer contemplation by Peter is expressed in the verb theoreo**. But in Jn 20:8 the grasping by John of the significance of the undisturbed cloths is denoted by **horao**. " ([W E Vine-see A-9](#))

**Wayne Detzler** has a helpful comparison of the 3 main NT words used to describe vision...

In the New Testament three main words speak of seeing, and each one has a distinctive flavor.

The most common is the word **horao**. It appears more than 350 times in the New Testament. It means to have personal experience of something or someone. Its emphasis falls on participation. From a physical standpoint, this word speaks of "catching sight" of someone or something. On the first Easter Sunday morning an angel assured the disciples that they would "**behold**" (**horao**) the Lord (Mt 28:7, 10). In the same vein the disciples had **seen** the miracles that Jesus did. They were not just figments of their fertile imaginations (John 4:45). Indirectly Jesus claimed, to the amazement and anger of the Pharisees, that He had **seen** Abraham's days (John 8:57). This word relates to the experience of seeing, to physical vision. **Horao** also expresses spiritual vision. Jesus warned the disciples to "**Watch out**," to be on their guard and not be taken in by the Pharisees (Mt. 16:6). The same word was used in a totally different context when Judas rued his treachery against Christ, and the Jewish authorities told him to **look out** for himself (Mt 27:4). So in a figurative sense this word means to look out for dangers.

A second word is **blepo**, which appears about 137 times in the Greek New Testament....the main thrust concerns the ability to see, sight in contrast with blindness. Other related concepts are reading, the perception of a truth, and a prophetic vision....Jesus employed this word when He spoke of seeing a speck of dust in your brother's eye, while ignoring a log in your own eye (Mt 7:3). (**Ed Note:** Blepo = ability to see as distinct from blindness - Mt. 12:22; 15:31; Mk 8:23, 24; Lk 7:21; Jn 9:7, 15, 19, 21, 25)

There is a third word which is used only 58 times. This is **theoreo**. The English reader can easily see that this word is related to "theory." Here the viewer is a spectator enjoying the spectacle and theorizing about its meaning....Theoreo...combines ideas from the other two words. In fact, its basic meaning seems to be prolonged contemplation. When Jesus was being crucified, many of the women who followed Him **gazed** at the spectacle of His crucifixion (Mt 27:55). This verse brings up a thorny issue. Why is it that women often demonstrated a greater fidelity in following the Lord than men did? The same word is used by Christ in describing devotion to Himself. Contemplation is seen as essential to discipleship. Followers are ones who behold the Lord, who do not lose sight of Him (Jn 6:40)....Theoreo has a figurative meaning. The Samaritan saw that Jesus was a Prophet (4:19). In the same way Paul saw through the religious practices of the Athenians (Acts 17:22). (**Ed Note:** Theoreo = to look at a thing with interest and with care for details - Mk 15:47; Lk 10:18; 23:35; Jn 20:6, 12, 14)

Therefore the words used for sight in the New Testament are similar to their English counterparts. All three have a physical application, what one sees with his eyes. They also have a figurative usage, that which is seen by mental perception....All three of these words occur in the New Testament, and each of them has a distinctive role. Together they give a picture of sight and vision in the Greek New Testament. ([New Testament words in today's language- Wayne A Detzler](#))

**NAS** translates theoreo as beholds(1), look(1), looking(5), observe(3), observed(4), observing(3), perceive(2), saw(8), see(16), seeing(2), seen(1), sees(4), watched(1), watching(2).

**Theoreo** - 58x in 56v - Take a moment to study the passages (checking the context may be necessary) and you will begin to understand that **theoreo** means more than simply **seeing**.

Matthew 27:55 Many women were there **looking** on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to **look** at the grave.

**Comment:** Theoreo is used here to indicate the intent of the two Mary's to observe the details about the tomb of Christ for the purpose of meditating upon the holy event. They were not just coming to see the grave, but to behold the grave, expecting to be affected by the entombment of Christ.

Mark 3:11 Whenever the unclean spirits **saw** Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "You are the

Son of God!"

Mark 5:15 They came to Jesus and **observed** the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened.

Mark 5:38 They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He **saw** a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

Mark 12:41 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began **observing** how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

Mark 15:40 There were also some women **looking** on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome.

Mark 15:47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were **looking** on to see where He was laid.

Mark 16:4 Looking up, they **saw** that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

Luke 10:18 And He said to them, "I was **watching** Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

Luke 14:29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who **observe** it begin to ridicule him,

Luke 21:6 "As for these things which you are **looking** at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

Luke 23:35 And the people stood by, **looking** on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."

Luke 23:48 And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they **observed** what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.

**Comment:** They were contemplative spectators, men and women who could later describe what took place.

Luke 24:37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were **seeing** a spirit.

Luke 24:39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you **see** that I have."

John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, **observing** His signs which He was doing.

John 4:19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I **perceive** that You are a prophet.

John 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they **saw** the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

John 6:19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they **saw** Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

John 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who **beholds** (present tense) the Son and believes (present tense) in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

**Vine comments: Theoreo** here indicates a close contemplation or careful perusal, and the meaning is, "everyone who contemplates the Son with the effect of believing on Him." (**Ed Note:** In this passage Jesus uses theoreo essentially as a synonym of believing) It was not so with the Jews. They had **seen** Him (**horao**) and did not believe (Jn 6:36 where "have seen" = horao, used also in Jn 9:36, 27 "have both **seen** Him"). **A person cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved without that measure of consideration of His person and work of redeeming grace which results in faith in Him. No mere passing consideration is sufficient.**

John 6:62 "What then if you **see** the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?

John 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may **see** Your works which You are doing.

John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never **see** death."

**Comment: Theoreo** in this context and in Jn 17:24 means to experience or partake.

John 9:8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously **saw** him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the

one who used to sit and beg?"

John 10:12 "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, **sees** the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

John 12:19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You **see** that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

John 12:45 "He who sees Me **sees** the One who sent Me.

**Comment:** John 14:9 says "He who has seen me has seen the Father" -- This is "a different verb, **horao**...from that in Jn 12:45 (theōreō). **Theōreō** denotes to be a spectator of: it stresses the action of the beholder; **horao** lays more emphasis on the object beheld, upon the direction in which the vision goes. This is especially exemplified in the Lord's word here to the disciples, that the Father manifests Himself in the Son (cp. Jn 1:17, 18 which uses **horao**).

John 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not **see** Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

**Comment:** Theōreō is used in relation to seeing the Spirit of truth and means being affected by the Spirit of truth.

John 14:19 "After a little while the world will no longer **see** Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

John 16:10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer **see** Me;

John 16:16 "A little while, and you will no longer **see** Me; and again a little while, and you will see (horao - used also in same tense in 1Jn 3:2) Me."

John 16:17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not **see** Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father '?"

John 16:19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not **see** Me, and again a little while, and you will **see** Me'?"

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may **see** My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

**ESV Study Bible Note:** "to observe with sustained attention," and includes the idea of entering into and experiencing something.

John 20:6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he **saw** the linen wrappings lying there,

**Comment:** He did not just see them, but he "beheld" them, he scrutinized them, he examined them closely with a sense of amazement! And who wouldn't, for they were "empty" wrappings! Jesus was not dead but alive, even as He had prophesied to the disciples.

John 20:12 and she **saw** two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

John 20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and **saw** Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

Acts 3:16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you **see** and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

Acts 4:13 Now as they **observed** the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Acts 7:56 and he said, "**Behold**, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Acts 8:13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he **observed** signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Acts 9:7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but **seeing** no one.

Acts 10:11 and he **saw** the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was **observing** the city full of idols.

Acts 17:22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, **lobserve** that you are very religious in all respects.

Acts 19:26 "You **see** and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

Acts 20:38 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 21:20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You **see**, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

Acts 25:24 Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen here present with us, you **see** this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly declaring that he ought not to live any longer.

Acts 27:10 and said to them, "Men, **lperceive** that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

Acts 28:6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had **seen** nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

Hebrews 7:4 Now **observe** how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and **sees** his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**Vine comments:** Theoreo signifies something more than merely seeing, it suggests a definite contemplation of the brother's circumstances. The apostle John uses this word twenty-three times in the Gospel, and more frequently than any other New Testament writer, though this is the only place in his epistles.

**Dodd** says, "If such a minimal response to the law of charity, called for by such an everyday situation, is absent, then it is idle to pretend that we are within the family of God, the realm in which love is operative as the principle and the token of eternal life" Johannine Epistles, p. 86).

Revelation 11:11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were **watching** them.

**Comment:** This will be the ultimate "theater!" The world watches intently and we astonishment.

Revelation 11:12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies **watched** them.

**Theoreo** -29x in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Josh 8:20; Jdg 16:27; Ps 22:7; 27:4; 31:11; 50:18; 64:8; 66:18; 68:24; 73:3; Pr 15:30; 31:16; Eccl 7:11; Dan 2:31, 34; Da 3:24, 27; 4:10, 13; 5:5; 7:2, 4, 6f, 9, 11, 13, 21; 8:15. See nuances of "see" suggested by following uses in Lxx - Josh 8:20 = inhabitants of Ai **saw** smoke of their burning city! Jdg 16:27 = 3,000 were on the roof **looking** on while Samson was amusing them; Ps 22:7 = a prophecy speaking of **seeing** Jesus on the Cross. Dan 2:34 Nebuchadnezzar continued **looking** at the great statue.

**They were accompanying him to the ship** - "This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine, but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly and won great love from them." (Guzik)

**Peterson** notes...

Similar departure scenes in Acts 21:5-6, 12-14, show a surprising depth of relationship with Christians in Tyre and Caesarea, where he had not spent the same length of time as he did in Ephesus. Paul is sometimes misrepresented by his critics as a hard and austere man, lacking compassion and kindness. However, this passage is one of several challenging that distorted view (cf. 2Cor. 2:4; 1Th 1:7-8). ([Acts of the Apostles Pillar New Testament Commentary](#))

**Accompanying** (4311) (**propempo** from **pró** = before, + **pémpo** = to send) literally means to send before. In the NT the idea is to send forward on one's journey, to bring someone on his way, especially to accompany for some distance in token of respect and honor (as in the present passage). **Propempo** also conveys the idea of to help one forward on his journey, including furnishing things necessary for one's travel (1Cor 16:11).

**John Polhill** writes that "Propempō is used of accompanying or escorting people to their point of departure and often has the additional nuance of giving them food and provisions for their journey. That may well have been the case in this instance. ([New American Commentary – Volume 26: Acts](#))

**BDAG:** (1) to conduct someone who has a destination in mind, accompany, escort... (2) to assist someone in making a journey, send on one's way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc

**NAS translates propempo** - accompanying(1), escorted(1), help(1), helped on my journey(1), helped on my way(1), journey(1), send...on his way(1), send...on my way(1), send...on their way(2), way(1).

**Propempo** - 9x in 9v in the NT (not in the non-apocryphal Septuagint) -

Acts 15:3 Therefore, being **sent on their way** by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 20:38 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 21:5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our **journey**, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

Romans 15:24 whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to **behelped on my way** there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while--

1 Corinthians 16:6 and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may **send** me on my **way** wherever I may go.

1 Corinthians 16:11 So let no one despise him. But **send** him on his **way** in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

2 Corinthians 1:16 that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you **to be helped on my journey** to Judea.

Titus 3:13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos **on their way** so that nothing is lacking for them.

3 John 1:6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them **on their way** in a manner worthy of God.

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**Robert Moffat** laboured for more than fifty years in South Africa and chiefly at Kuruman. On Sunday, March 20, 1870, he preached for the last time in Kuruman church. In all that great congregation there were few of his own contemporaries. With a pathetic grace he pleaded with those who still remained unbelieving. It was an impressive close to an impressive career. On the Friday following the aged missionary and his wife took their departure. As they came out of their house and walked to their waggon they were beset with crowds of the Bechuanas, each longing for a handshake and another word of farewell, and as the waggon drove away it was followed by all who could walk, and a long and pitiful wail arose, enough to melt the hardest heart.

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**Brian Bell closes his notes with an illustration** - A missionary returning home after many years of service was asked, "Tell me what you found when you arrived in New Guinea." "Found? I found something that looked more hopeless than if I had been sent into a jungle of tigers." "What do you mean?" "Why, the people seemed utterly devoid of moral sense. If a mother was carrying her little baby and the baby began to cry, she would throw it into the ditch and let it die. If a man saw his father break his leg, he would leave him by the roadside to suffer by himself. They had no compassion whatever. They didn't even know what the word meant." "Well, what did you do for them?" "I thought it best to show them my faith by my works! When I saw a baby crying, I picked it up and consoled it. When I saw a man with a broken leg, I sought to mend it. When I found people distressed and hungry, I took them in, comforted them, and fed them. Finally they inquired, 'What does this mean? Why are you doing this for us?' Then I had my chance, and I preached the gospel!" "Did you succeed?" "My friend," said the missionary, "when I returned home on furlough, I left a church!" 3.23. Prayer: Lord may we stay for awhile in peoples lives, that we might leave endearing footprints on their hearts! ([Sermon Notes](#))

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**Illustration of Farewells** - Feb. 11, 1861 When A. Lincoln left Springfield, IL, to start his inaugural journey to Washington, D.C., he paid an unforgettable tribute to his friends and neighbors in what is known today as the Farewell Address. "My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell." Lincoln's farewell address was brief (perhaps a minute) but very thoughtful. And spiritual, which is something that is often missing in our farewells today. As Christians we should always part company as best we can and as blessed as we can.

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**Paul's Parting Commendation to the Saints at Rome** - Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (Ro 16:25–27)