

Acts 20:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Analysis

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood—Paul's charge to Ephesian elders combines pastoral authority, responsibility, and motivation. **Take heed... unto yourselves** prioritizes leaders' spiritual health before ministry. **The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers** (ἐπισκόπους) establishes divine appointment, not human ambition, as pastoral authority's source. **To feed** (ποιμαίνειν, 'shepherd') defines pastoral work as nourishing, guiding, protecting. **Church of God, which he purchased with his own blood** grounds pastoral urgency in the cross—shepherds serve blood-bought people. The phrase 'his own blood' remarkably attributes blood-shedding to God, affirming Christ's deity.

Historical Context

Paul's farewell address to Ephesian elders at Miletus (circa 57 AD), during his final journey to Jerusalem. He knew imprisonment awaited (v.23) and expected never to see them again (v.25). The 'savage wolves' warning (v.29) proved prophetic—false teachers later infiltrated Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3-7, 2 Timothy 1:15). This speech models pastoral succession and leader accountability.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does remembering the church's blood-purchase affect pastoral priorities and methods?
2. What does the Holy Spirit's appointment of overseers teach about church governance?

Interlinear Text

προσέχετε	οὖν	ἐαυτοῖς	καὶ	παντὶ	τῷ	ποιμνίῳ	ἐν
Take heed	therefore	unto yourselves	and	to all	^{G3588}	the flock	over
G4337	G3767	G1438	G2532	G3956		G4168	G1722
ἣν	ὕμᾱς	τὸ	πνεῦμα	τὸ	ἅγιον	ἔθετο	ἐπισκόπους
the which	you	^{G3588}	Ghost	^{G3588}	the Holy	hath made	overseers
G3739	G5209		G4151		G40	G5087	G1985
ποιμαίνειν	τὴν	ἐκκλησίαν	τοῦ	θεοῦ	ἣν		
to feed	^{G3588}	the church	^{G3588}	of God	the which		
G4165		G1577		G2316	G3739		
περιποιήσατο	διὰ	τοῦ	ἰδίου	αἵματος			
he hath purchased	with	^{G3588}	his own	blood			
G4046	G1223		G2398	G129			

Additional Cross-References

1 Timothy 4:16 (Parallel theme): Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

1 Timothy 3:2 (Parallel theme): A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Acts 13:2 (Holy): As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Jeremiah 3:15 (Parallel theme): And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

1 Corinthians 10:32 (References God): Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God:

1 Timothy 5:17 (Parallel theme): Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

Micah 5:4 (References God): And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.

Hebrews 13:17 (Parallel theme): Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

1 Timothy 3:5 (References God): (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)