THE REASON PAUL LEFT TITUS IN CRETE

Titus 1:5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.

The First Step in Missionary Work

Mark 16:15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Matthew 24:14 “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”

The Second Step in Missionary Work

Matthew 28:19&20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 14:21&22 (ESV) When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

The Third Step in Missionary Work – Appointing Elders for Churches

Establishing Churches

Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

Acts 2:41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

Acts 2:47b And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Acts 4:4 But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

Acts 5:12b-14 And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

I Corinthians 5:1a It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you,

I Corinthians 5:12&13 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

I Timothy 3:14&15 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

What Elders Do

I Peter 5:1-3 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed. Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

Acts 20:17&18a From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived he said to them:

Acts 20:28-31a “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!”

Ephesians 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ might be built up

The word translated pastor in verse eleven is translated shepherd in the other seven times it occurs in the New Testament. In the Greek, the word teacher describes the word pastor. A pastor is one who shepherds by teaching.

Elders are *“presbuteros,”* older, mature in their faith. Elders are *“episcopos,”* overseers, those who oversee, watch over, the church. The primary duty of an elder is being a shepherd to the flock, the church.

Two other passages: Jesus is the Good Shepherd in John 10:1-18; Psalm 23

Poor shepherding leads to disaster. Ezekiel 34:1-3 The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock.’”

Ezekiel 34:4-6 “’You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.’”

God is Israel’s Shepherd. Ezekiel 34:11-13 “’For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so I will look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness. I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries. I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land.’”

Ezekiel 34:14-16 “’I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will tend my sheep and have them lie down, declares the Sovereign LORD. I will search for the lost and bring back the strays, I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock with justice.

Ezekiel 34:17-19 “’As for you, my flock, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?’”

Ezekiel 34:20-22 “’Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I will judge between one sheep and another.

Things to Remember

As a missionary, Paul had three main objectives: To lead people to Christ; to disciple those who believed; to establish churches with qualified elders to shepherd them.

From Scripture it is obvious that a church is a definite numbered group whose identity is obvious.

A church is not really organized until it has qualified elders.

Elders are spiritually mature men who oversee the church. Their primary job is to shepherd the flock. Pastors shepherd by teaching.

Shepherding involves helping the weak and injured and keeping the flock together so it can be protected by the shepherd from wolves from the outside and from people from within who want people to follow them.

“Scattered sheep become lunch meat.”

God the Father has brought back His sheep, Israel, to the land he promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob so He can care for and protect them there.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd of the Church.