

Acts 13 & 14

Acts 13:45-47 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming. **46** Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. **47** For so hath the Lord commanded us, [*saying*], I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

I Corinthians 2: 1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. **2.** For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified

I Corinthians 1: 22-23 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: **23** But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Notice the contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles.

This contrast states three facts about each group.

Jews

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1. How they felt. | “saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy” | 2. |
| What they said. | “spake against those things ...” spoken by Paul | |
| 3. What they did. | “seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life” | |

Gentiles

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1. How they felt. | “they were glad” | |
| 2. What they said. | “glorified the word of the Lord:” | |
| 3. What they did. | “as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” | |

The Jews felt jealous, spake against those things which were spoken by Paul , blaspheming and rejected the Gospel. Gentiles felt joy, praised God’s word, believed.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Extreme pre-destination supposes that God has pre-destined or pre-ordained in this case all human history in each person's life, in detail. This concept believes that God chose some to be saved before the world began, and He chose all the rest to be lost. Therefore man has no choice to believe or not to believe.

"... as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The word "ordained" is used in the KJV and RSV. Some translate it "determined" or "marked out". The expression is difficult to interpret and been the source of much heart-searching controversy and much confusion of mind. There is nothing in the context, and no manuscript evidence that the author says "pre-destined" or, "pre-ordained", no matter what translation you use, ordained, arranged, marked out, or, determined; "pre" is not in the word. Those who believed were not pre-ordained they were ordained. In the second place, the author does not say that God did the ordaining.

We as Christians, have the testimony of God that man is made in "the image and likeness of God". Genesis 1:26. Man is created enough like God that he can weigh alternatives and make choices. God is Sovereign and man is sovereign. For God said unto man, "have dominion" Genesis 1:28.

"as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The subject of the clause is, "as many as", the form of the verb is past perfect, indicative, passive, third person plural; meaning to draw up in order, in the military sense. Arrange, according to rank, fall in line, or as many as fell in arranged themselves to life eternal, "believed." The Greek language uses the middle voice which always has the subject doing the action. So, "as many as" those who "believed", "ordained" themselves to eternal life by falling in line. Believers did the determine

Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

This verse introduces Paul's missionary strategy for world conquest with the Gospel. This strategy engraves itself on the rest of the missionary work including Luke's method of developing the rest of the unfolding story, found in Acts.

"was published throughout all the region" The verbal clause "was published" is an in imperfect tense verb showing continuous, repeated, reiterated action, throughout all the region. The preaching kept on, going on and on and on ...

When the Romans developed their political administration of Asia Minor, now Syria and Turkey, they carved out a province stretching from Pontus (POHN-tuhs) on the Black Sea to Pamphylia on the south ... giving it the old, ethnic name Galatia (gah-LA-shah), example, USA. To this large administration, they subdivided the province into regions, example, Texas. Within each region was a prominent city, example, Dallas, from which radiated lines of commercial, social, and religious communication to outlying cities, villages, and rural areas. Pisidia was a region within Galatia, and Antioch, was it's central city. World Wide Radio audience, this is how to conquer the religious world in your country, state & city. Develop a Church in your home and have your friends and relatives do the same.

This verse implies some time passed while the whole region was being influenced by the Gospel. As people came to Antioch for business, legal, trade, and festivals, they heard the Gospel, and Churches in the homes of Christians formed all over the region. Christianity is always discipling, preaching, teaching, growing.

In conquering the Greco-Roman world, it was Paul's strategy to get into the great Roman metropolitan centers of influence. Evangelize the center, and thus touch the whole. Use the Roman Province, region and city administrative organization to reach the circumference of the Governmental units. By this method Paul would take the Gospel from Antioch in Syria, to Rome in a decade or more.

From Antioch in Pisidia, the missionaries fled east to Iconium in the same "region". We assume that some residents of Iconium visited Antioch who heard the Gospel became friends and brethren. The experience of the missionaries in this new city was like their experience in the previous city.

Acts 14

Acts 14:1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

There is emphasis on the word "and" in the Greek presenting the idea that Jews and Greeks are presented as a combine of humanity that believed.

The Apostles spoke with such power & demonstrations of the Spirit, that a great multitude of Jews and also of God fearing Greeks believed & obeyed the Gospel.

Acts 14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

There was division. Those who stubbornly rejected the gospel were filled with hatred and opposed the brethren in every possible way. As they could do nothing without the aid of the Gentiles in that Gentile city, they sought to prejudice them.

In this verse it is disobedient Jews who stir up the Gentiles who are willing to be stirred up. They join with their Jewish new found friends against the Christians.

Acts 14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

For a long time, Paul and Barnabas continued to preach there with great success. How long they continued at Iconium is unknown, but since the first missionary journey occupied three or four years, they probably were here several months.

Acts 14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

The term "apostles" is used in verse 4. It is applied in the New Testament a number of times to persons not of the twelve, but apostolic men. Paul was an apostle, chosen by the Lord, and Barnabas was an apostolic missionary, sent out (apostle means "off send" or "one sent off") by the Holy Spirit or a congregation.

This was the talk of the town ... there was brutal division. Apparently the author is trying to say that the Gentiles combine with the Jews to do whatsoever they do ... Jews lead out in the faith or in persecution. They are the first to hear. Naturally they will be the first to receive or the first to reject the Gospel. What Luke says here is that in the analysis it is the Jews and the Gentiles that respond. In other words it is the individual human beings that accept or reject Christ. Every bucket sits on its own bottom before God in the Judgment.

Acts 14:5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use [*them*] despitefully, and to stone them,

"... an assault." The Greek term implies a sudden movement ... the attempt was avoided by the Apostles receiving information and escaping the plot to murder them by Ruling Jews of the synagogue and Gentile leaders from the city.

God's own chosen people Jews were now joining with idolaters to murder their Messiah the Kings' messengers or Angels (same word in Greek) called Apostles.

Acts 14:6 They were ware of [if], and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia (LI-kay-ohn-ee-ah), and unto the region that lieth round about:

In fleeing from Iconium cf: v:1, the mission party fled east to the next “region” like at Lycaonia, it implies that they escaped the immediate threat from the Antioch & Iconium combination. Now the cities of the Licaonium (LI-kay-ohn-ee-uhm), region, Lystra and Derbe (DERB) become the center of the missionary conquest work. All of these “regions” were within the Roman providence of Galatia it was to these house churches and these cities that later Paul would write the N. T. Book of Galatians. Paul spent enough time to plant house churches in each of these great cities. Two to six months each at a minimum. At least four distinct city churches were planted: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, made up as far as we know according to the primitive model of the more affluent Christians dedicating their homes for the Churches to assemble .

Acts 14:7 And there they preached the gospel.

At Lystra the Apostles enjoyed a lengthy period of uninterrupted evangelizing.

The ruins of Lystra are called by a name meaning "The Thousand and One Churches," because of the ruins of so many Churches in houses which later became by the time of Byzantine Empire hand-me-down sacred Church buildings.

Acts 14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

Just like Acts 3 & the man Peter & John cured at Gate Beautiful, this man: He had no muscular power, and probably his ankle bones were dislocated or he had what is commonly known as club foot or polio.

Acts 14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

**The man was a well-known cripple lame “from his mother's womb” after hearing the apostles' message he felt the saving power through the Apostles preaching. How did faith come to this poor heathen? By hearing the word of God preached
Romans10: 17 So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**

... he must have understood the doctrine he heard and believed that Jesus could make him whole ... he could have heard of the miracles which the apostles had worked in V:3 and this would raise his hope of him too receiving a healing cure.

Acts 14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Isaiah 35: 5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame [*man*] leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing ...

What is God saying to us? Just as in Acts 2, in Jerusalem at Pentecost: power to preach and convert along with in Acts 3, the power to heal the lame man at the Gate Beautiful and here we have preaching and healing. The Holy Spirit's power is universal. The Gospel has power, in the conquest of the Gentile World too.

Acts 14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

Paul had preached in Greek but in their religious rites and in the present excitement they used their local tongue or language ... The Lycaonians, are called by Homer, a people of a barbarous and strange language.

They imagined that their celestial gods often assumed human forms to visit men, in order to punish the evil and reward the good. Greek and Roman mythology is full of such visitations, myths and fables so are Homer, Virgil, and other poets.

Acts 14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

The pagan population immediately identified Barnabas as Jupiter the chief of the gods because he was older and was silent. Paul was younger and preached whom they identified as Mercury the speaker or spokesman of the gods.

In their local lore an ancient fable represents Jupiter and Mercury coming to this very city of Lystra in this same region, where they were entertained by King Lycaon (LI-kay-ohn), from whom the Lycaonians derived their name ...

Acts 14:13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

“...the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city” There is a meaning here, which most readers will overlook and not understand. Gentile cities thought themselves under the protection of a particular deity. In this case Jupiter because of their ancient local fable, the image of Jupiter was placed at the gate of the city, to signify that he was the guardian and protector of the city. Luke is every- where accurate as he describes such detail throughout the Book of Acts. Lystra, was under the guardianship of Jupiter. Luke says “Jupiter, which was before their city” is another term for Jupiter Custos, or Jupiter the guardian.

A rendition of it may be seen in Gruter's Inscriptions, Jupiter is represented naked, sitting on a consular chair; in his right hand he holds his thunder, and a long staff in his left; at his right, stands the eagle prepared for flight; and, above, the winged cap of Mercury. On the base is the inscription, Iuppiter Custom Domus (DO-muhs) Aug. Jupiter, the guardian of the house of Augustus.

Homer's Odysseus (Ulysses & Cyclops) xvii. V: 485 “For in similitude of strangers oft, The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume, Repair to populous cities, where they mark The outrageous and the righteous deeds of men.”

“... Oxen and garlands...” - That is, oxen adorned with flowers, their horns gilded, and neck bound about with fillets, was the custom in sacrificial rites. They also crowned the statues of their gods, floral crowns were also worn by the priest offering sacrifice and gates of the temples, were crowned with flowers ... Many examples in the Greek and Latin writers of this method of adorning the sacrifices.

Acts 14:14 [*Which*] when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard [*of*], they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

When the apostles realize that these idolaters were treating them as gods they are horrified and immediately try to stop them.

Acts 14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Throughout the scriptures false gods and idolatry are termed vanities ... This is the Gospel confronting local false religion, legends, myths and superstitions. What a bold saying it was to call to their beliefs “vanities” right in the face of a heathen mob, intent on performing an act of their superstitious worship ... in

which they thought the safety of their city was at stake ... this very city believed: The ancient fable related by Ovid, "Jupiter, having been informed of the great degeneracy of mankind, was determined himself to survey the earth. Coming to this province, (Lycaonia) (li-CA-own-e-ah), disguised in human shape, he took up his residence at the palace of Lycaon (LI-kay-ohn), then king of that country. Giving a sign of his godhead, (just like them seeing the lame man healed, v:8) the people worship him but King Lycaon sneers, doubts his divinity, and is determined to put him to test. Some ambassadors from the Molossian (moh-LOS-see-an) state having just arrived, he slew one of them, boiled part of his flesh, and roasted the rest, and set it before Jupiter. The god, indignant at the insult, burnt the palace, and turned the impious king into a wolf." From this fable, the whole province was called Lycaonia. They have just seen a miracle by the Apostles what would you expect them to do? They believe this is Jupiter & Mercury who they believe almost destroyed their city before ... wake up howling at the moon.

Paul's sermon was radically different from that spoken in the synagogue at Antioch. Here at Lystra we have a sample of how the Gospel has adapted itself to the demand of the local situation. The facts of the Gospel are unchanging but the manner of approach is different to each specific audience..

Messengers are just human beings and men of similar passions of other men they only announce the good news of the Gospel and the nature of God. He is not sticks and stones like your idols, or Jupiter before the Gate.

To a pagan audience it is the nature of God that must be made clear first.

Idols are vanities, turn FROM them.

God is a living God, turn TO Him.

God is the creator of all life.

The emphasis is now on the nature of God rather than the fulfillment of Old Testament prophesy which would be meaningless to Gentiles who had never heard or had the "fair warning" the Jews enjoyed by having the Old Testament Law and the prophets.

Romans 3:1-2 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit [*is there*] of circumcision? 2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God

Acts 14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

The word we translate, all nations, should be rendered, all the Gentiles, merely to distinguish them from the Jewish people, who having a revelation, were not left to walk in their own ways. But the heathens, who had not a Bible revelation, were suffered to form their creed, and mode of worship, according to their own ideas. So they imagined their gods like themselves ... oversexed, fornicating, perverted, drunkards, tricksters, full of mischief and all wickedness ... Paul explains cf:

Romans 1:21-24 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [*him*] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the un corruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

So in times past God tolerated the Gentile nation's misuse of their freedom.

Acts 14:17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

“Who in times past” He had let the nations go their own ways until it should be demonstrated that man by philosophical searching cannot find God. Efforts of human wisdom in the ancient world were a utter dismal foolish failure.

“Nevertheless he left not himself without witness” Nature with many voices testified of Him. God has left witnesses to Himself in His creation.

Romans 1:18-21 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [*it*] unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [*even*] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

The terrestrial creation, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, look at the water cycle, evaporation, condensation and precipitation, the seasons spring, summer,

fall and winter, you plant, and harvest, every seed, plant, or animal bears after its own kind. There is extreme order to the creation clearly showing the creator. He provided good things, rain, fruitful seasons, food and gladness.

In the celestial kingdom we have the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and matching the Seasons. Early man soon realized he could by observing the stars judge the seasons and know when to plant his crops. Design is everywhere in the universe.

Anywhere you see a Design there must be a Designer.

Psalm 19: 1-6 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. 3 [*There is*] no speech nor language, [*where*] their voice is not heard. 4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 Which [*is*] as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, [*and*] rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. 6 His going forth [*is*] from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Romans 10:15-18 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith [*cometh*] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Acts 14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

Paul confronted them about their local legends and myth.

Cease your sacrificing to men. We are not your superstitious imaginations of your gods. We are not going to burn your city down turn you into a wolf howling...moon

Acts 14:19 And there came thither [*certain*] Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew [*him*] out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

A whole book could be written about this verse. These Jewish degenerate bigot opposers followed from the last scenes of the Gospel triumphs, and found the Lystrians disappointed that they had not been allowed to adore and worship Paul

and Barnabas. From one extreme they were easily led to the other. If they were not gods, they were bad men. The fickle populace was easily stirred to riot, and, led by the Jews they seized and stoned the great apostle Paul for healing a cripple. Just exactly like the satanic High Priest and Jews wanted to kill and stone Peter, John and the Apostles for healing the cripple at the Gate Beautiful in Jerusalem ... cf: Acts 4 & 5 ... but too many witnesses had seen the miracle.

‘...supposing he had been dead.’ He very well may have been dead.

In this paragraph the author of Acts Luke’s point is to be found in the rejection of the Gospel rather than its acceptance. The people’s attitude shifts quickly when the ruling Jews talk to them: It becomes if they are not gods then they are imposters “so let’s stone em and kill em ...”

Acts 14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

That the Gospel had notable success here there is no doubt. Verse 20 states that there are disciples. Later in Acts Paul revisits here many brethren cf: Acts 14:21 & 16:1-3. A Church was planted and people assembled in homes in the primitive model of Church planting and growth.

The chief point however is the extreme degree that the bitter hatred of the Jews descended in their rejection of the Gospel. The “Satanic Worship” of the heathen is out done by the “satanic hatred” of the Jews.

I Corinthians 10:20 But [*I say*], that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

From the days of the Babylonian captivity (See my paper on Jeremiah’s 70 years of captivity) from 606 to 536 BC and the destruction of the first temple 586 to 516 BC Jews were notoriously and tenaciously monotheistic and dead set against idolatry, recognizing it was devil worship. Yet these Jew abhorers of idols journeyed all the way from distant Antioch and Iconium to join hands with idolaters and devil worshipers in stoning to death Jewish men whose sole crime was to win men from idols to the one and only living God ... through Jesus Christ.

These are the satanic depth to which men can sink when hate takes over the heart in moral blindness covers reason. Those Ruling Jews of Antioch had

previously judged “themselves unworthy of eternal life” now their proceeding to sink deeper into the quicksand of sin than the devil worshiping idolaters...

Of the work at Lystra Luke does not feature any success until this verse we don't even know that there were any converts at all.

Was there any success at Derbe only a half of a verse is given to that work?

Yes, they disciple the city in a goodly number. But Luke gives no details because nothing of importance happened at Derbe that added any distinctive advance to the unfolding story of conquering the Gentile world for Christ.

Acts 14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and [*to*] Iconium, and Antioch,

A new congregation was planted but there are no new significant developments. The continuing acceptance of some of the Jews and many of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Ruling Class of the Jews who ran the synagogues ... they continued to be jealous that “their” brother Jews and Gentile God fearers were converting to Christianity. Just like in the case of the Jerusalem Temple there has been a change in the mind and heart of the High Priest and rulers from His house to our house ... the same is happening in minds and hearts of the rulers of the diaspora synagogues scattered throughout the Gentile world cf:

John 11: 47-50 Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all [*men*] will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them, [*named*] Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, 50 Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. (Liar, liar pants on fire ... they want to kill 2 Lazarus & Jesus)

Acts 14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, [*and*] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

They personally exhorted the brethren to make them more steadfast in the faith.

“Through much tribulation” They taught them that they must expect trials and persecutions. All have to bear the cross. Cf: Romans 5:2-3, and II Corinthians 4:17

Speaking of the Old Testament heroes of the faith the Hebrew writer says:

Hebrews 11: 36-38 And others had trial of [*crue*] mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38 (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and [*in*] mountains, and [*in*] dens and caves of the earth.

Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

No doubt gifts of the Spirit had been imparted to individuals in each congregation. As the mission work expanded the Christian Jews and Gentile converts were alienated from the synagogues and these new house churches must have their own organizational structure. The Synagogues furnish the pattern of “Elders” and Jewish Christian converts furnished local leaders well taught in the Law and the prophets to guide the baby Gentiles in the Faith their homes became Churches.

A Plurality of Shepherds or Elders: A congregation when set in order is to have a plurality of shepherds or elders. Whenever the scripture speaks of the office, every time it is in the plural form. cf: Acts 14:23, 20:17, Titus 1:5, 1 Peter 5:1, Philippians 1:1 & James 5:14. Therefore, at least two elders are necessary but a congregation may set apart as many shepherds as are fully qualified and the congregation desires.

Why are three classes of terms and six English words used to refer to one office? The first class, shepherds and pastors Greek: *poime'n* beautifully describes their work as shepherds or pastors of God's flock (His people). The second class: elders or presbyters Greek *presbyteros*: speaks of their person as regarding their age and Christian experience. The third class refers to their being superintendents of the congregation.

Qualifications for Elders or Shepherds: The following passages state the qualifications for elders:

1 Timothy 3:1-7 This [*is*] a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he

take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Titus 1:5-9 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:²
6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

I Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [*thereof*], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over [*God's*] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

For the convenience, all three passages are being collected into one list of qualifications. They are also cataloged as “Negative” (those things that he must not be) and as “Positive” (those things he must be).

Negative: (1) “not given to wine” (2) “not a striker” (3) “not covetous” (4) “not a novice” (5) “not self willed” (6) “not soon angry”.

Positive: (1) “The husband of one wife” (2) “vigilant” (3) “sober” (4) “of good behavior” (5) “given to hospitality” (6) “patient” (7) “a lover of good men” (8) “just” (9) “holy” (10) “blameless (11) “temperate” (12) “apt to teach” (13) “of a good report of them without” and (14) “one that ruleth well his own house”.

Remember Paul said” “a bishop MUST be” what he describes in these qualifications – 1 Timothy 3:2

Bishops or Overseers: Comes from the Greek word epis-kop-os. A study of this word shows that the translators had to choose another English word every time *episkopos* was used in which an elder or shepherd was not meaning. What word did they choose to use? Visited - Luke 1:68, visited – Luke 7:16, visited – Matthew

25:35-36, over – Acts 6:3, visit - Acts 7:23, visit - Acts 15:14, visit - Acts 15:36, visitest – Hebrews 2:6 and visit – James 1:27. This would seem to indicate visiting the flock of God is one of the chief duties of Bishops and Overseers. The Roman Church system cheats the sheep out of personal visitation because no Roman bishop can possibly visit the people of his Dioceses.

How do we know that ‘bishop’ or ‘overseer’ designates the same person that the word “elder” does? Read Titus 1:5 and 7. In verse 5 Paul speaks of ‘elders’ and in verse 7 ‘bishops’ when referring to the same class of persons. Also compare Acts 20:17 and 28. The “elders” in verse 17 that Paul called to him, he also calls “overseer” in verse 28. Therefore, they also are used interchangeably.

Why are three classes of terms and six English words used to refer to one office? The first class, shepherds and pastors Greek: *poime'n* beautifully describes their work as shepherds or pastors of God’s flock (His people). The second class: elders or presbyters Greek *presbyteros*: speaks of their person as regarding their age and Christian experience. The third class refers to their being superintendents of the congregation.

I Timothy 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man ...” means, “Do not get in a hurry to name any man as an elder. The imagery is that of the laying on of the hands of the presbytery which accompanied the ceremony in the earliest times.

“... Neither be partakers of other men's sins ... This warns that the person responsible for appointing elders who prove unfaithful is, in a sense, partaker of their sins, unless due deliberation, investigation and testing preceded such unfortunate appointment. However, the share of the sins of others is not borne by the minister who properly observes these restrictions, restraints and precautions. The same applies to the presbytery itself in the normal situation where they name additional elders to aid in the guidance of the church.” “Keep thyself pure ... This has primary reference to the matter of irresponsible appointment of church elders, just mentioned.” cf: Burton Coffman Commentary

“Lay hands suddenly on no man.” "All the old commentators, and the great majority of modern ones, applies this to ordination." The meaning is that no man must be ordained to office until his fitness is surely known. Neither be partaker, etc. He who appoints an unfit man to office becomes in a certain sense

responsible for that man's sins. Keep thyself pure. Free from the sins of other men. cf: B.W. Johnson Peoples New Testament Commentary.

“Lay hands suddenly on no man - Do not hastily appoint any person to the sacred ministry:” cf: Adam Clarke Commentary

Acts 14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

Acts 14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

Attalia was a sea-port town in Pamphylia.

The journey back to Antioch in Syria and the home Church is quickly told in verses 24-38.

Acts 14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

But on to Syria and the home church at Antioch, a return “... from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work ...”. cf: Acts 13:2

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The most striking fact about this report is that they told the story from the view point of divine activity. Paul and Barnabas had suffered stoning reviling and humiliation they had literally shed blood but they saw life and their work in it as what God had done with them. They were the tools that pried opened the tightly closed doors to the Gentiles. Yet they had eyes to see that in their toil of unlocking the bolts that excluded the Gentiles it was God opening a door of faith.

From the New Testament the Apostolic point of view human life is not just human activity... It is the arena of divine activity also. cf:

I Corinthians 3: 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. **8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, [*ye are*] God's building. **10**

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [*that*] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which [*temple*] ye are.

This is the reality, the true view of our activity in the Kingdom as we work together under God.

Acts 14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Sources: KJV Bible, theWord.com, Coffman, B.W. Johnson, Clarke & J.W. McGarvey commentaries, World Conquest, along with Google images & Wikipedia.