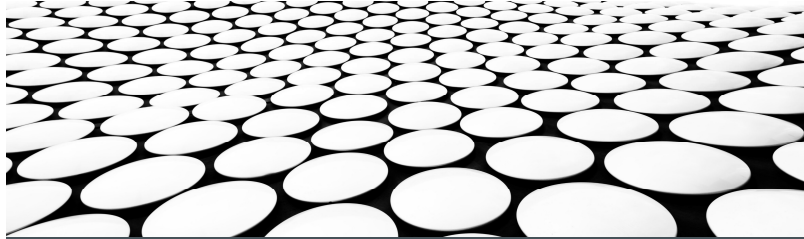


SHEPHERDOLOGY 101

FROM SHEPHERDLESS SHEEP TO FLOURISHING FLOCKS - THE NEED / THE ANSWER



Before getting into the theology of shepherding, we have considered **Three Fundamentals**

- I. Fundamental 1: Jesus, Our Lord
- II. Fundamental 2: Jesus' Word, Our Effective Guide
- III. Fundamental 3: Jesus, Our Model Shepherd

REVIEW - WHY STUDY SHEPHERDOLOGY?

- Jesus longs for shepherds who can minister to distressed and dispirited sheep.
- In all things, including what shepherds do, Jesus knows and decides what must be done.
- Give a gift to Jesus that is just what He yearns for.
- Do what is wise in the present.
- Do what Jesus will commend when He returns.

REVIEW

- God's word clearly teaches us what we need to know about shepherds and how God will work accordingly.
- Jesus is the perfect example of a good shepherd.
- Access divine power that produces remarkable and enduring results.
- Benefit from the greatest shepherding mentor of all time.

We are now ready to learn about the need for Shepherds and how God has met this need.

- I. Fundamental 1: Jesus, Our Lord
- II. Fundamental 2: Jesus' Word, Our Effective Guide
- III. Fundamental 3: Jesus, Our Model Shepherd
- IV. The Need for Shepherds – **The Perfect Gift!**
- V. The Development of Elders – **Who Shepherds?**

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- There lies within us an inbuilt and persistent natural pre-disposition to run amok. God's people need shepherds who can help us stay out of trouble!
- In an ultimate sense, salvation itself involves coming to our Shepherd: "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- **The wolf problem:** "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16).
- **The lion problem:** "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- **The shepherd solution:** "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him'" (1 Samuel 17:34–35).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- Not all shepherds fill the bill!

“Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, ‘Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat *sheep* without feeding the flock. ▷

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered’” (Ezekiel 34:1–5).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- The flock was “scattered for lack of a shepherd” (Ezekiel 34:5) – they have “shepherds,” but they are shepherds in name only.
- They are using their title as leverage for self-interest. Through force and severity, they dominate the flock.
- Good shepherds are not motivated by what the sheep can do for them, but by what they can do for the sheep.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- How realistic is it to hope for shepherds who are capable of following Jesus’ example?
- This would be a vain hope except for one thing: God has a plan!
- The prophet Jeremiah caught a glimpse of it: “Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- The day Jeremiah foresaw dawned when Jesus ascended from the mount called Olivet.
- Here is Paul's action report of what happened far above the heavens: "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, / HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, / AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN. ... And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors [shepherds] and teachers" (Ephesians 4:8, 11).

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- When Jesus returned to heaven in triumph, He launched a campaign of dispensing gifts to His people.
- Among these gifts are good shepherds, shepherds who are difference makers for the sheep.
- Paul provides a glimpse into how these gifts are distributed in something he says to the elders of Ephesus.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- "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" (Acts 20:28).
- Paul is addressing a group called "elders" (Acts 20:17).
- Note the phrase, "among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers?"

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- It was Paul's customary practice to appoint elders in newly planted local churches (Acts 14:23).
- However, Paul does not say "whom I appointed" (Acts 20:28).
- He thus indicates that the Holy Spirit was the One who did the appointing of elder-overseers to shepherd the Ephesian church.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- When Paul came to Ephesus and planted a church, the Holy Spirit took some gifts from the storeroom and dispensed them just as Paul recounts.
- This perfectly answers to Jesus' prayer request in Matthew 9:38.
- The Father, Son, and Spirit are making sure that gifts of good shepherds are provided wherever the flock is found. They give precisely what is needed.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- "Normal" church is wolf packed! "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29).
- The gift of shepherds is exactly what is needed to combat this and numerous other perils for sheep.
- But this only works when shepherds shep well! (See owner's manual!)

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- God's gifts need to be used in ways that align with the heart and guidance of the giver.
- God's gifts can be neglected (1 Timothy 4:14) or ignored (2 Timothy 1:6).
- We must be good stewards of God's gifts and use them in ways that His word indicates will optimize their positive impact on others (1 Peter 4:10).


IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- When Rochelle and I give a Lego set to the grandchildren, the instructions that come with the set matter profoundly.
- On the box is a glorious picture. But if we fail to follow the instructions, the "gift" can become a gateway to frustration.
- The Bible gives us instructions for God's (and Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's) good gift to the church.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- When shepherds who have been given by the Holy Spirit to a specific church are distracted, passive, oblivious, or disengaged, the flock is at risk.
- Our assignment concerns nothing less than the health and welfare of souls: *They keep watch over your souls* (Hebrews 13:17).
- When shepherds embrace their calling and engage in what they are supposed to do, the flock will flourish!

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- Jesus has given to His Church the gift of Shepherds who do well as they emulate the Chief-Shepherd.
- “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; 

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- “Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever” (Psalm 23:1-6).
- A good shepherd is actively involved in doing whatever it takes to promote the true good of his flock.

IV. THE NEED FOR SHEPHERDS

- Practical question: Do you know the state of your sheep?
- You can start by doing a spiritual audit – practice five will get you started.
- I like to use questions! “He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him” (Proverbs 18:13).

SUMMARY & BENEFITS

- The Father, Son, and Spirit have given the gift of good shepherds to Jesus' church.
- Study Shepherdology so you can understand how to make the most of this good gift to His church.

- I. Fundamental 1: Jesus, Our Lord
- II. Fundamental 2: Jesus' Word, Our Effective Guide
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- V. The Development of Elders – **Who Shepherds?**

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- Of 11 appearances of ποιμαίνω (*poimainō*), 5 connect to Jesus, 2 to physical shepherds, **2 to elders / overseers, 1 to Peter**, and 1 to “self care” (Jude 12).
- Of 18 appearances of ποιμήν (*poimēn*), 17 refer to either Jesus or a physical shepherd, **1 to a church leader** (Ephesians 4:11).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- The most common term for leaders of the local church is “elders” (*presbuteros*, πρεσβύτερος), followed by “overseers” (*episkopos*, ἐπίσκοπος).
- These terms describe individuals who are called to “shepherd” the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
- So to trace the origin of local church **shepherds** requires us to look at the history of “**elders.**”

V. The Development of Elders

- A. First Appearance of “Elders”
 1. In Israel
 2. In the Church
- B. Normative Presence of Elders
 1. Instituted
 2. Prescribed
 3. Valued

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

A. First Appearance of “Elders”

1. In Israel
 - “Go and gather the elders” (Exodus 3:16).
 - Boaz met with ten elders to secure a legal ruling (Ruth 4:2).
 - By the 8th century BC, the elders were off the rails.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

“The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people, / ‘It is you who have devoured the vineyard; / The plunder of the poor is in your houses. / What do you mean by crushing My people / And grinding the face of the poor?’ / Declares the Lord GOD of hosts” (Isaiah 3:14–15).

- These are stern words from God against elders who have become little more than thugs.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- By the 6th century BC, things have only gotten worse! “Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all?’” (Ezekiel 14:1–3).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- These men were making an outward show of desiring God's guidance even as their hearts were clearly devoted elsewhere.
- Jesus encountered more of the same when He began His public ministry.
- In the Gospels, elders are consistently presented in a negative light and were complicit in the plot to crucify the Lord.

. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- The elders of Israel in the time of Jesus represented a very powerful and influential group focused on questioning and condemning any who threatened their position and influence.
- Elders such as these would definitely **not** be an asset to Jesus' church.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

A. First Appearance of "Elders"

2. In the Church

- Surprise! We first encounter "elders" in the church at Jerusalem: "And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders" (Acts 11:30).
- A plurality of elders can be seen in a positive light in Jerusalem (Acts 15:4; 21:18), Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and the churches of the diaspora (James 5:14).

. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- We are left to conclude that the title "elder" was capable of being repurposed to refer to local church leaders, despite abuses it suffered from the men who sought Jesus' death.
- Point of similarity: New Testament elders can be seen analyzing and ruling on doctrinal matters (Acts 15:6, 22, 23). One of the qualifications for an elder, "just" (Titus 1:8), denotes an ability to do exactly this.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- But make no mistake; what these elders of Israel were and what Jesus intends for men of His church are worlds apart.
- As we will see, elders in His church are to be men of sterling character, not hypocrites. They exercise a robust range of responsibilities that promote the true good of others rather than weigh men down. They minister from pure and selfless motives, not as an ego trip.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- One of Peter's manner descriptors for elders describes a mode of shepherding that is decidedly different from what the elders in Jerusalem demonstrated.
- "Nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock" (1 Peter 5:3).
- Such elders herald a whole new way of shepherding.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- "Lordship leadership" is a clear and present danger to the saints.
- "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ▷

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28).
- An inbuilt pre-disposition toward "lordship leadership" can only be curtailed by an intentional paradigm shift.

V. The Development of Elders

- A. First Appearance of “Elders”
 1. In Israel
 2. In the Church
- B. Normative Presence of Elders
 1. Instituted
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V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- Instituted: The NT reports Paul and Peter’s practice of appointing elders.
- Prescribed: The NT directs that elders be installed to promote healthy churches.
- Valued: The NT cites numerous benefits associated with elders who shepherd well.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Paul’s SOP:** “After 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*, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.’ When they had **appointed elders for them in every church**, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:21–23).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Peter’s Plan:** “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen” (1 Peter 1:1).
- “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” (1 Peter 5:1).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- Paul's Directives: Serious negative influences were getting traction (Titus 1:10-16).
- So Paul directed Titus: "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains, and **appoint elders in every city** as I directed you" (Titus 1:5).
- Character qualified and engaged elders are essential to a healthy church.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Elder/shepherds convey benefit to the saints.**
- When shepherds equip the flock, the saints effectively do the work of ministry and the body of Christ comes into its own (Ephesians 4:11-12).
- When the right kind of elders are actively ministering in churches, the saints are fed and grow; such men also neutralize influences that could work their harm (Titus 1:9-11).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- Elders are capable of ministering healing and restoration (James 5:15).
- Elders provide the saints with a positive illustration of what it means to follow Jesus (1 Peter 5:3).
- As the saints respond well to such leaders, the saints' soul-health is promoted (Hebrews 13:17).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Summary:** Most glimpses of elders in the Old Testament and in the Gospels are decidedly negative.
- In striking contrast to their Old Testament counterparts, however, New Testament elders bring a robust set of ministry skills to bear on the spiritual health of a people.
- They are difference makers. The welfare of a church will be hobbled by their absence or diversion.

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Paul's Prediction:** “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. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and **from among your own selves men will arise**, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:28–30).

V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

- **Implication:** Elders can be a tremendous asset. But it is entirely possible for elders to turn to the dark side.
- This is why Paul pleads with the Ephesian elders not just to guard the flock but to guard *themselves* (Acts 20:28).
- **Benefit:** Studying what the Bible says about shepherding can boost our ability to resist shepherd cancer.

REVIEW – WHY STUDY SHEPHERDOLOGY?

- Jesus longs for shepherds who can minister to distressed and dispirited sheep.
 - In all things, including what shepherds do, Jesus knows and decides what must be done.
1. Give a gift to Jesus that is just what He yearns for.
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REVIEW – WHY STUDY SHEPHERDOLOGY?

- God's word clearly teaches us what we need to know about shepherds and how God will work accordingly.
 - Jesus is the perfect example of a good shepherd.
4. Access divine power that produces remarkable and enduring results.
 5. Benefit from the greatest shepherding mentor of all time.

REVIEW - WHY STUDY SHEPHERDOLOGY?

- The Father, Son, and Spirit have given the gift of good shepherds to Jesus' church.
 - Shepherds are an essential asset to Jesus' church, when they are good shepherds.
6. Understand how to make the most of this good gift to His church.
 7. Ensure that all the positive benefits of good shepherds are realized by the flock.

VI. THE SHEPHERDS RESOURCE LIBRARY

- The Ten Key Passages that speak at length to NT Shepherds are: Acts 20:17-35; Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-16; Hebrews 13:7, 17; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 5:1-4.
- From these passages we can learn about 6 key topics: Essential Function, Specific Responsibilities, Qualifications, Manner, Response, and Reward

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