

read: “to shepherd the church of the Lord that he bought with his own blood.”

### **Acts 20.17-28 (NRSV)**

<sup>17</sup>From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. <sup>18</sup>When they came to him, he said to them:

“You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, <sup>19</sup>servicing the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. <sup>20</sup>I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house, <sup>21</sup>as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. <sup>22</sup>And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup>except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. <sup>24</sup>But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God’s grace.

<sup>25</sup>“And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, <sup>27</sup>for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. <sup>28</sup>Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

### **Introduction**

In this well-known passage, Jesus declares the foundation upon which he will build his church. The text is not completely clear what “this rock” refers to. It may be the confession of faith that Peter here professes, or it may be Jesus himself.

### **Matthew 16.13-20 (NRSV)**

<sup>13</sup>Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup>And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup>Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

for March 22, 2009

### **Introduction**

In this passage, in the chapter just before the giving of the Ten Commandments, God promises to make the people of Israel God's "treasured possession." In the King James Version "a treasured possession" is translated as "a peculiar treasure."

### **Exodus 19.1-9 (NRSV)**

<sup>1</sup>On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. <sup>2</sup>They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. <sup>3</sup>Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: <sup>4</sup>You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup>Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup>but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

<sup>7</sup>So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>8</sup>The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after."

### **Introduction**

This is from Acts' account of Paul's farewell address to the church of Ephesus. One plausible translation of 20.28 would