

ACTS CHAPTER 20

Paul in Macedonia again

SETTING OUT FOR JERUSALEM

Acts 20:1-6

"After the disturbance had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples. He spoke words of encouragement to them and bade them farewell and departed to go to Macedonia. When he had gone through those parts and when he had spoken many a word of encouragement to them, he went into Greece. When he had spent three months there, and when he was about to set sail for Syria, a plot was made against him by the Jews. So he made up his mind to make the return journey through Macedonia. As far as Asia there accompanied him Sopatros, the son of Pyrrhus, who belonged to Beroea; and, of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius from Derbe and Timothy; and the men from Asia, Tychichus and Trophimus. They went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. After the days of unleavened bread we sailed away from Philippi; and in five days time we came to them at Troas; and there we spent seven days."

Paul had set his heart on making a collection from all his churches for the church of Jerusalem.

It was to receive contributions to that fund that he went into Macedonia.

From Ephesus, Paul goes to Macedonia

1) When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia.

1] Inappropriate chapter division, verse 1 should be part of Chapter 19.

The rioting in Ephesus convinced Paul that he should move on.

Heads west across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia (modern Greece).

Exhortation: sufficiency not of ourselves (2 Cor 1:8-11).

2 Cor. 1:8-11 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: [9] But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: [10] Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; [11] Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Paul's Ministry through Macedonia into Greece

Luke's brevity requires culling details from epistles.

Many visits not recorded: Albania and Yugoslavia (Illyricum).

Paul had dispatched Titus to Corinth,

Now Paul is anxious to meet Titus in Troas (anxious to know what effect his first epistle had);

Paul's concern for Titus being overdue causes Paul to leave for Macedonia;

Paul lands at Philippi. Again.

At length, Titus arrives, with better tidings than Paul had dared to expect.

2 Cor. 7:6 Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;

2 Cor. 7:13 Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.

Paul writes his 2nd Epistle to Corinthians, dispatching Titus with it.

2 Cor. 2:12-13 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, [13] I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went

from thence into Macedonia.

2 Cor. 7:5-8 *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears. [6] Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; [7] And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. [8] For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.*

Travels through Greece and Macedonia

2) He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3) where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4) He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5) These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

Six years had elapsed since Paul's 1st visit to Macedonia.

When Paul had gone through those parts he came to Greece.

It must have been on this occasion that he visited Illyricum.

Romans 15:19 *Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

These few words summarize what must have been about a whole year of journey and adventure.

Epistle to the Romans written from this stay at Corinth.

Ac.20:3 tells us that when Paul was about to set sail from Greece to Syria a Jewish plot was unmasked and he changed his route to an overland way.

Often from foreign ports Jewish pilgrim ships left for Syria to take pilgrims to the Passover.

Paul must have intended to sail on one.

On such a ship it would have been an easy thing for the fanatical Jews to arrange that Paul should disappear overboard and never be heard of again.

In Ac.20:4 we have a list of Paul's companions on his journey.

These men must have been delegated from the various churches charged with the duty of taking their contributions to Jerusalem.

Those going with him are there to protect Paul and the contributions and to vouch for Paul's good stewardship back to their home churches.

They were demonstrating thus early that the Church was a unity and the need of one part was the opportunity of the rest.

Paul had seven companions - messengers?

1 Cor. 16:3-4 *And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. [4] And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*

Messengers of seven churches?

Carrying love offerings (protect vs. robbers).

Fellowship, assistance, etc.

Tychicus was the bearer of the Epistles of the Colossians and Ephesians (Col 4:7-8; Eph 6:21-22).

Col. 4:7-8 *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: [8] Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;*

Ephes. 6:21-22 *But that ye also may know my affairs,*

and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: [22] Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Trophimus was, according to tradition, one of the seventy disciples, and after the death of Paul, was beheaded under Nero. Slaves numbered their children: Secundus (2nd), Terius (3rd) etc.. In Ac.20:5 the narrative turns from the third to the first person again.

“Us” = Luke rejoins. Constant companion;
at the end, “only Luke is with me...” (2 Tim 4:11).

2 Tim. 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

Luke tells us that they left Philippi after the days of unleavened bread.

The days of unleavened bread began with the day of the Passover and lasted for one week, during which the Jews ate unleavened bread in memory of their deliverance from Egypt.

The time of the Passover was the middle of April.

Getting to Troas

6) But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Paul has now sailed back across the Aegean Sea, eastward to Troas and Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)

A YOUNG MAN FALLS ASLEEP

Acts 20:7-12

"On the first day of the week, when we had gathered together to break bread, Paul, who was about to leave on the next day, spoke to them, and he prolonged his talk until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were assembled. A young man called Eutychus was sitting by the window. He began to be overcome by a deep sleep. While Paul was talking he was still more overcome by sleep and he fell right down from the third floor and was taken up dead. Paul went down and threw himself on him. He put his arms round him and said, 'Stop making a fuss, for his life is still in him.' So he went back upstairs and broke bread and ate; and he talked with them a long time until dawn came and so he departed. And they brought in the boy alive and were greatly comforted."

Eutychus' Fall From Grace - A long sermon and Eutychus raised from the dead

7) On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8) There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9) Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10) Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" 11) Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12) The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

This is one of the first accounts we have of what a Christian service was like.

It talks twice about breaking of bread.

In the early Church there were two closely related things.

One was what was called the Love Feast.

To it all contributed and it was a real meal, often the only proper meal that poor slaves got all week.

Here Christians ate in loving fellowship with each other.

The other was the Lord's Supper which was observed during or immediately after the Love Feast.

All this happened at night.

That is probably because it was only at night, when the day's work was done, that slaves could come to the Christian fellowship.

It was the first day of the week: Saturday night after 6 pm?

It was dark. Numerous lights: large group (also note that the lights would be consuming oxygen).

In the low upper room it was hot and the air stale.

The many smokey lamps made the air oppressive.

Eutychus, no doubt, had done a hard day's work before ever he came and his body was tired.

He was sitting by a window to get the cool night air.

The windows were not made of glass.

They were either lattice or solid wood and opened like doors, coming right down almost to the floor and projecting over the courtyard below.

Paul sensed the need to carry on long because he was ready to depart the next day; he knew he might never see these particular Christians again.

Paul addressed for six hours! (Preaching = art of talking in someone else's sleep.)

We should probably not take it that Paul spoke on and on; there would be talk, questions, and discussion.

The tired Eutychus, overpowered by the stuffy atmosphere, succumbed to sleep and fell to the courtyard below.

When the crowd poured down the outside stair and found the lad lying senseless below, they began to scream in an uncontrolled eastern way;

Greek: Plainly indicates that he was taken up lifeless.

Paul told them to stop the fuss, for the life was still in the lad.

Paul's approach of falling on this young lad is the same thing that:

Elijah, dead son of woman of Sarepta ();

1 Kings 17:21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

Elisha, dead son of Shunammite (2 Kings 4:34);

2 Kings 4:34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

Jesus, (Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52).

Mark 5:39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

Luke 8:52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

The Greek implies that Eutychus was raised from the dead, not just unconscious.

Paul, Eutychus, and the others went back upstairs ate and finished their discussions.

And Paul, obviously getting their attention back, continued preaching until daybreak!

At daylight the meeting broke up and the people together with Eutychus, completely recovered from his fall, went to their homes.

STAGES ON THE WAY - Paul's address to the Ephesian elders

Acts 20:13-16

"But we went to the ship and set sail for Assos, for there we intended to take Paul on board for he had arranged things in this way, since he himself intended to do that stage on foot. When we met him at Assos we took him on board and went to Mitylene. On the next day we sailed away from there and arrived opposite Chios. On the second day we crossed over to Samos and on the next day we came to Miletus.. for Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so as not to have to spend time in Asia. For he was in a hurry to be, if it were possible for him, in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost."

Paul comes to Miletus and sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus

13) We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14) When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15) The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 16) Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

17) From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

Because Luke was with Paul we can follow the journey almost day by day and stage by stage.

35 miles by sea (around Cape Lectum);

the sea journey involved the rounding of Cape Lectum against the strong prevailing north-easterly winds.

20 by land:

Paul apparently preferred to walk from Troas to Assos instead of

sail with the rest of his group; but he sailed with them from Assos to Miletus.

Paul had ample time to make the journey on foot and be picked up at Assos.

It may be that he wanted the time alone; a desire for privacy, prayer and solitude.

Mitylene was on the island of Lesbos,

Chios was on Samos and

Miletus was 28 miles south of Ephesus at the mouth of the Maeander River.

Paul chose a ship that did not stop at Ephesus.

He goes to Miletus and sends for the Ephesian elders.

Paul's intention wasn't to slight the church in Ephesus, but he knew that it would be impossible for him to have a short visit there, and he wanted to hurry to Jerusalem.

Paul stayed in Miletus for 3-4 days.

Pentecost came seven weeks after Passover and having missed Passover Paul was eager to be there for that great feast.

The Jewish ancestral feasts were still dear to him.

He was the apostle to the Gentiles and his own people might hate him; but in his heart there was nothing but love for them.

Paul's farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church

A SAD FAREWELL

Acts 20:17-38

"From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. When they were with him he said to them, 'You yourselves know how, from the first day I came into Asia, I spent all the time, during which I was with you, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and amidst the trials that happened to me because of the machinations of the Jews. You know how I kept back nothing that was to your profit, how I did not fail to announce my tidings to you and to teach you both publicly and from house to house, testifying to both Jews and Greeks repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, look you, I go bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem, although I do not know what will happen to me there, except that from city to city the Holy Spirit testifies to me that bonds and afflictions await me. But I reckon my life worth nothing and I do not count it precious to myself, so be it that I may finish my course and complete the task I received from the Lord Jesus--the task of bearing witness of the good news of God. And now, look you, I know that all of you, amongst whom I went about preaching the Kingdom, will see my face no more. Therefore I affirm to you this day that I am clean from the blood of all men; for I kept back nothing in my proclaiming to you of the whole will of God. Take heed for yourselves and take heed for all the flock in which the Spirit of God has appointed you overseers, so that you may be shepherds to the Church of God which he has rescued through the blood of his own One. I know that after I have gone away fierce wolves will enter in to you and will not spare the flock; and from your own number there will arise men who will speak perverse things to draw the disciples away after them. Therefore be watchful and remember that for three years, day and night, I never stopped instructing each one of you with tears. And now I hand you over to God and to the word of His grace which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all those who have been sanctified. I coveted no man's silver or gold or raiment. You yourselves know that these very hands

served my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. Always I showed you that working like this a man must help those who are in trouble and that you must remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that it was he who said, 'It is happier rather to give than to get.'" When he had said this he knelt down and prayed with them all. And there was great lamentation among them all. They fell upon Paul's neck and kissed him repeatedly, for they were grieved most of all at the word that he had said, that they would see his face no more. And they escorted him to the ship."

Farewell Address to the Ephesian Elders Most poignant of all his utterances.

Paul makes certain claims for himself.

(i) He had spoken fearlessly.

He had told them all God's will and pandered neither to the fear nor the favour of men

(ii) He had lived independently.

His own hands had supplied his needs; and his work had been not only for his own sake but for the sake of others who were less fortunate than himself.

(iii) He had faced the future gallantly.

He was the captive of the Holy Spirit; and in that confidence he was able to brave everything the future might hold.

Paul also urges certain claims upon his friends.

(i) He reminded them of their duty.

They were overseers of the flock of God.

That was not a duty they had chosen but a duty for which they had been chosen.

The servants of the Good Shepherd must also be shepherds of the sheep.

(ii) He reminded them of their danger.

The infection of the world is never far away.

There was a constant warfare ahead to keep the faith intact and the Church pure.

That feeling should be in every church; for when love dies in any church the work of Christ cannot do other than wither.

18) When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19) I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. 20) You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21) I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22) "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23) I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24) However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

25) "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26) Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27) For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28) 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. 29) I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30) Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31) So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32) "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33) I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34) You yourselves know that these

hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35) In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Paul first calls attention to himself as an example; not as an example instead of Jesus, but as an example as he follows Jesus.

19] Condition of the apostle in Ephesus was one of great danger

1 Cor. 15:31-32 I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. [32] If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

2 Cor. 1:8-10 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: [9] But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: [10] Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

Paul recognizes the dangerous road that is ahead of him; apparently he had received many words of prophecy telling him of this danger already.

Yet he is not dissuaded by danger, but willing to lay down his life for the gospel of the grace of God.

20] Note here Paul notes that he preached house to house.

Met in home...

From house to house implies that the Ephesian church, lacking any central building, was organized logically in house-churches; probably, each elder had charge over a particular house-church.

22] Paul's own spirit...

27] “whole counsel of God.”

Paul can leave these Christians to God's care with a good conscience, knowing that he has not shunned declaring to [them] the whole counsel of God.

His counsel to the elders is plain:

take heed to yourselves and to all the flock;

The godly leader knows that effective leadership flows from a life, not just knowledge.

Also important to leaders is the principle that the church belongs to God, because He purchased [it] with His own blood.

Taking care of the flock basically amounts to two things:

being a shepherd to the flock and

watching over them, protecting them from danger.

"They are to be shepherds of God's church, poimanino meaning in general to tend a flock and in particular to lead a flock to pasture and so to feed it.

This is the first duty of shepherds.

Watch applies both to savage wolves who come in from the outside, and to those who rise up from among you.

29] Grievous wolves; perverse men.

Two classes of enemies: external and internal.

Paul knew that spiritual attack would rise up among the church itself; we should be aware that Satan likes to attack through infiltration.

Paul's concerns for the church in Ephesus were justified.

30] No fewer than six false teachers from Ephesus:

- Hymeneus (1 Tim 1:20);
- Alexander (1 Tim 1:20);

1 Tim. 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that

they may learn not to blaspheme.

- Phygellus (2 Tim 1:15);
- Hermogenes (2 Tim 1:15);

2 Tim. 1:15 This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.

- Philetus (2 Tim 2:17);

2 Tim. 2:17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

- Diotrefes (3 John 1:9).

3 John 1:9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

Doctrine of the Nicolaitans?

Rev 2:6; where's their lightstand? Rev 2:1-7

Rev. 2:6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Rev. 2:1-7 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; [2] I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: [3] And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. [4] Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. [5] Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. [6] But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. [7] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the

Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Epistle to the Colossians, written at the same time as the one to its neighbor, Ephesus,

evidence the propagation of Gnostic errors in Proconsular Asia.

32] Not just initial stages of salvation, but the subsequent stages of “up-building,” even to consummation of final inheritance, is here ascribed to the ability of God to bestow it

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Ephes. 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Jude 1:24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

2 Tim. 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Four Ways:

- 1) Admonish with tears, speaking the truth in love..
- 2) Use the Word
- 3) Be selfless in your ministry
- 4) It is better to give than to receive

34] Paul notes that he earned his own living.

Paul commends [them] to God and the word of His grace.

His parting words are taken from a quote of Jesus' unrecorded in the gospels, are perfect for all who would minister to God's people:

It is more blessed to give than to receive;

ministers must be more concerned about what they can give their flock than concerned about what their flock can give them.

It should not stumble us to consider that Jesus taught many things unrecorded in the gospels;

John said as much in John 21:25.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

But we can trust that God has preserved all that is necessary of the teaching of Jesus.

Paul's tearful goodbye to the Ephesian elders

36) When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37) They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38) What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

They did try to respond to Paul's admonition as they did cast out the liars (Rev 2:2,4,6).

Rev. 2:2 *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:*

Rev. 2:4 *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*

Rev. 2:6 *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.*

John spent his final years a Bishop of Ephesus.

Paul and the Ephesian leadership part with prayer, tears, and a sending-off party, knowing that they would only meet again in eternity.

This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine, but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly and won great love from them.

38] Did see his face once more:

1 Timothy hints that he did end up going back once more