

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Part 10 – Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey (18:23-21:16)

(No. 1119.10 – - NLC)

I. PAUL LEAVES ANTIOCH & APOLLOS IN EPHESUS

Acts 18:23-28: ²³After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

²⁴Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

²⁷When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. ²⁸For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

- A. “After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of **Galatia** and **Phrygia**, strengthening all the disciples.” (v.23)
1. After Paul’s departure from Antioch, the first leg of his 3rd missionary journey was similar to that of his 2nd journey, likely passing through Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch—cities where there were established churches—to strengthen the disciples in those places.
 2. There is no indication that Paul carried out pioneer evangelism in these cities, but simply offered encouragement to old friends and converts; neither is there any record of opposition or hindrance as he had experienced on previous missions.
- B. “Meanwhile a Jew named **Apollos**, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough

knowledge of the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.” (vv.24-26)

1. After Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus on his first hasty visit there, God in His sovereign providence had brought another key person to Ephesus—Apollos.
2. **Apollos** would prove to be an important co-laborer with Paul, particularly in Corinth; a brief résumé or bio is given:
 - a) He was Jew and native of Alexandria, Egypt—the place where the OT had been translated into Greek; the second most important city in the Roman empire;
 - b) He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the OT Scriptures;
 - c) He had been instructed in the way of the Lord;
 - d) He spoke boldly and with great fervor, teaching about Jesus accurately and proving He was the Christ from the Scriptures.
3. Because Apollos only knew the baptism of John, **Priscilla and Aquila** invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.
 - a) The details of what Priscilla and Aquila explained to Apollos are not given; presumably, Apollos only knew of Christ’s ministry up to John’s baptism of repentance—he had not heard of baptism in the name of Jesus or the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38-39); in Acts 19:1-7, Paul met some disciples in Ephesus in a similar spiritual condition (who may possibly have been taught by Apollos while he was still in this earlier state of partial understanding).
 - b) How beautiful to see the humble character of Apollos—though very knowledgeable in the OT Scriptures, he was also very teachable and open to further instruction from tentmakers—Priscilla and Aquila!

- c) NOTE: Although Priscilla and Aquila had their secular business of tent making, they were also very busy in the Lord's work in Ephesus; Paul had obviously trained them well during the time they had spent together.
- C. "When Apollos wanted to go to **Achaia**, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." (vv.27-28)
1. Achaia – the Roman province whose capital was Corinth;
 2. Apollos was a great help in **Corinth**, where he seemed to center his efforts; Paul refers to him frequently in his epistle to the Corinthians, where it is clear that he was recognized as an important leader in the church:
 - a) **1 Cor. 1:12:** *What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."*
 - b) **1 Cor. 3:4-6, 22:** *⁴For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? ⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow... ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours...*
 - c) **1 Cor. 4:6:** *Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.*
 - d) **1 Cor. 16:12:** *Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.*
 3. "Those who **by grace had believed**" (v.27) – This is a profound statement often overlooked by Bible scholars:

man's ability to *believe* in Christ is the result of the mysterious workings of God's *grace* in his heart! Even the faith to believe is not our own—it is the generous, gracious gift of God!

- a) **Eph. 2:8-9:** ⁸*For it is **by grace** you have been saved, through **faith**—and **this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God**—⁹*not by works, so that no one can boast.**
 - b) **Rom. 12:3:** *For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with **the measure of faith God has given you.***
 - c) Please refer to *Section III.D* of Part 8 on pp.141-149 for a lengthy discussion of the mysterious cooperation of divine election by grace and human responsibility in the process of salvation.
4. Apollos vigorously convinced the Jews in **public debate**, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (v.28)

II. PAUL IN EPHESUS

Acts 19:1-12: ¹*While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples ²and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They answered, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” ³So Paul asked, “Then what baptism did you receive?” “John’s baptism,” they replied. ⁴Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. ⁷There were about twelve men in all.*

⁸*Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.*

¹¹God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹²so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

A. “While Apollos was at Corinth, **Paul** took the road through the interior and arrived at **Ephesus**. There he found some disciples and asked them, ‘**Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?**’ They answered, ‘**No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.**’ So Paul asked, ‘Then what baptism did you receive?’ ‘John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John’s baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.’ On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and **they spoke in tongues and prophesied**. There were about twelve men in all.” (vv.1-7)

1. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” – This was obviously an important matter to Paul (and should be to any Christian minister). What prompted his question is unknown, but he apparently discerned something was lacking in their Christian experience.
2. Like Apollos, they had only heard of John’s baptism (as suggested earlier, it is not unreasonable to think that these disciples might have been taught by Apollos before Priscilla and Aquila explained to him the way of God more perfectly).
3. Following the pattern given in Acts 2:38-39, Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus and prayed for them to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
4. They spoke in tongues and prophesied [see Mark 16:15; Acts 2:4; 10:46 and *Section I.E* of Part 3 on pp.23-26].
5. NOTE: Here, as in Acts 8:12-17 and Acts 10:44-48, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was an experience *separate* and *distinct* from new birth or water baptism; contrary to what *most* commentators say, the Holy Spirit is NOT received automatically at the time of salvation—it is a subsequent and discrete act that follows thereafter.

B. “Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and

publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the **lecture hall of Tyrannus**. This went on **for two years**, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (vv.8-10)

1. Three months in the synagogue, followed by two years in the hall of Tyrannus, gives us a clear timeline of Paul’s extended visit in Ephesus; Paul later referred to his **three years in Ephesus** (Acts 20:31)—not a contradiction, for by Jewish reckoning, any part of a year was considered a year. This is the longest stay in one city that Luke records in Acts.
2. Paul followed the same customary approach in Ephesus: Jews first, then Greeks; when the Jews became obstinate and refused to believe, they stirred up trouble once again.
3. The Jews “publicly **maligned** the Way”
 - a) They spread evil rumors before the congregation, reviling and cursing the Christian Way.
 - b) “The Way” – a term commonly used to refer to the early Church movement [see Acts 9:2; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14, 22; and *Section V.C.3* of Part 6 on p.95].
4. Paul left the synagogue, and began having daily meetings for the next two years in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This was probably a school used by the philosopher Tyrannus; he would have given his classes in the cooler morning hours. One Greek manuscript records that Paul did his instruction from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the hot time of the day, but a time when the hall would have been available and people were not at their regular work.
5. NOTE: Throughout the book of Acts, the **apostles and believers met together wherever possible**:
 - a) In **rented rooms** or in other **people’s houses** (Acts 1:13; 2:46; 4:23; 5:42; 10:23-48; 12:12-17; 18:7; 20:7-9; 28:30-31);
 - b) In **temples or synagogues** (Acts 2:46; 5:12, 42; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1-3, 10, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8);
 - c) In **schools** (Acts 19:9-10);

- d) In the **open air**, the **streets** or the **marketplace** (Acts 14:8-20; 16:13-16; 17:17);
 - e) Unlike many modern churches, there is NO MENTION in the 28 chapters of Acts of a single church buying properties, lands or buildings (just selling them! – Acts 2:45; 4:34-37); there is NO MENTION of building funds or programs! It simply was not their main focus. Perhaps we've got it all wrong!
6. "All the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." (v.10)
- a) Paul's extended stay of two years and three months paid huge dividends—all who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of God!
 - b) An important element of Paul's apostolic strategy is observed here: Many of the cities where he planted churches were strategic centers that, when evangelized, served as focal points from which the gospel could radiate out to the surrounding areas;
 - c) Others examples are: Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14), Thessalonica (Acts 17:1), and Corinth (Acts 18:1).
- C. "God did **extraordinary miracles** through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them." (vv.11-12)
1. NOTE: There is no record of a miracle being wrought by the hands of Paul since the casting out of the spirit of divination from the slave girl in Philippi (Acts 16:16-18); this is not to say there were no miracles in Athens, Thessalonica or Berea, although it is conceivable that Paul's preaching was with such power that no other miracles were needed.
 2. However, Paul confirms in his epistle to the Corinthians that many miracles were indeed done in Corinth; there, he speaks about signs, wonders and miracles as being "marks" or signs of a true apostle:

2 Cor. 12:11-12: *¹¹I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even*

though I am nothing. ¹²The **things that mark an apostle—signs, wonders and miracles—were done among you with great perseverance.**

3. The closest parallel to healing and deliverance taking place through a cloth in Christ's ministry was when people touched His cloak (Mark 5:27-34; 6:56).
4. Similar extraordinary, unusual signs accompanied the ministry of the apostle Peter when the sick were healed by his shadow and the dead were raised (Acts 5:1-16; 9:36-42).

III. THE SONS OF SCEVA

Acts 19:13-20: ¹³Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." ¹⁴Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. ¹⁵One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" ¹⁶Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

¹⁷When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. ¹⁸Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. ¹⁹A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. ²⁰In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

- A. "Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, 'In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.' **Seven sons of Sceva**, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, '**Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?**' Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.'" (vv.13-16)

1. Here again, we note that whenever God moves in power, Satan is invariably on hand to obstruct and oppose; examples that we have already encountered in Acts are the following:
 - a) Simon the sorcerer wanted to imitate Peter and John (Acts 8:9-24);
 - b) The false prophet Bar-Jesus opposed Paul, and tried to turn Sergius Paulus from the faith;
2. Now, drawn by Paul's ability to cast out demons by cloths he had touched, Jewish exorcists tried to copy his work.
3. Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, had previously been going around driving out evil spirits; that certain of the Jews actually had the power to expel demons was acknowledged by the Lord Jesus:

Luke 11:18-20: *¹⁸If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁰But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.*

4. But they tried using the name of the Lord Jesus as a magic charm to cast demons out of those who were possessed, saying, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."
5. One day the evil spirit answered them (demons often answered back to Jesus), "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"
 - a) It is obvious that all demons know who Jesus is;
 - b) This demon had heard about Paul—he knew who he was—what a compliment! He knew Paul had power and authority because he was a genuine follower of Jesus Christ. And here is a logical question: Do the devils know who *you* are or who *I* am? Have they heard about our preaching, holy living, anointing and power? Are they afraid of *us*?
 - c) The evil spirit didn't know who these sons of Sceva were!

6. “Then the **man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all**. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.” (v.16)
- a) It is significant to note that the *evil spirit* spoke through the demon-possessed man in v.15, but it was the *man* who stripped the would-be exorcists and beat them up!
 - b) The fact that this one demoniac was able to overpower seven men confirms accounts in other passages of Scripture that indicate how evil spirits are able to give extraordinary strength to those possessed:

Mark 5:1-4: ¹*They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.* ²*When Jesus got out of the boat, a **man with an evil spirit** came from the tombs to meet Him.* ³*This man lived in the tombs, and **no one could bind him** any more, not even with a chain.* ⁴*For he had often been chained hand and foot, but **he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.***

- c) This story is a sober warning to all those who name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity. If we resist the devil by a sincere, living faith in Christ, he will flee from us; but if we think we can merely use the name of Jesus like some lucky charm, the enemy *will* prevail against us.

B. “When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, **they were all seized with fear**, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. Many of those who believed now came and **openly confessed their evil deeds**. A number who had practiced sorcery **brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly**. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power. (vv.17-20)

1. God has strange ways of furthering His cause! The news of the exorcists’ encounter with the evil spirit caused a deep sense of awe and fear to fall on the people, just as it had happened in Jerusalem after Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead in the church (Acts 5:1-11).

2. The people realized that the things of God and the name of Jesus are not to be trifled with, nor should they be mixed with false religions or pagan practices and superstitions; they got serious about their Christian life, and started doing some serious house-cleaning!
3. The name of the Lord Jesus (not Paul!) was held in high honor [lit. “magnified”].
4. The Spirit of God worked so mightily among those who had practiced various forms of magical arts that a great number turned to Christ, confessing and exposing their evil practices; they even made a public demonstration of their faith by gathering up their books of magic and sorcery and burning them in a great bonfire (valued at approximately \$10,000 in modern currency).
5. It is well documented from history that Ephesus had a reputation for being a center of magical practice. According to magical theory, the potency of a spell was bound up with its secrecy; so if it were to be divulged, it would be rendered ineffective. So these converted sorcerers and magicians renounced their dark powers by rendering their spells inoperative.
6. A number of such magical scrolls have survived to our day and can be seen in museum collections in London, Paris, and Leiden.
7. There are some important lessons to learn from this account of the Ephesian believers:
 - a) They demonstrated what John the Baptist had called “fruits of repentance” (Luke 3:8-14)—outward acts resulting from deep conviction and repentance in their hearts;
 - b) The devil operates in darkness and secrecy, so confession and public exposure of hidden sin brings light and renders the devil powerless; Paul & John explained this in depth in their epistles:

Eph. 5:6-15: ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness,

righteousness and truth)¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. **¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.** ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do **in secret.** ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is **light that makes everything visible.** This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” ¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise...

1 John 1:5-9: ⁵This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. ⁷But **if we walk in the light**, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. ⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹**If we confess our sins**, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

- c) One of the titles given to Satan is *Beelzebub*, meaning “lord of flies” or “dung god” (Luke 11:15-19); in the context, the imagery is quite revealing. Demons are likened to flies (that are attracted to dung, filth and garbage), and the devil is lord over them. If one wants to get rid of flies, the remedy is quite simple: get rid of the garbage! Jesus was able to say that Satan had no place in Him, no claim on Him, and nothing in Him that belonged to the devil:

John 14:30 (AMP): *I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is **nothing in Me that belongs to him**, and he has no power over Me.]*

- d) The Ephesians understood this principle: *We don't want any demons jumping on us like the sons of Sceva, so we're going to clean house and get rid of anything that might attract evil spirits!* By no coincidence, Paul later wrote these words to the Ephesians in his epistle:

Eph. 4:27 (AMP): *Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him].*

- e) Likewise, when we turn to Christ in true repentance, we should be careful to get rid of any objects/items (books, music, photos, movies, art, statues, charms, idols, etc.) from our past, sinful life that might have connections with demonic spirits.
8. “In this way the **word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.**” (v.20)
- a) At this point, Luke gives another one of his gospel “progress reports” [see *Section I.H.1* of Part 5 on p.**Error! Bookmark not defined.**].
 - b) Perhaps if modern Christians would clean their houses and burn all the idols, trashy books, magazines, CDs and DVDs, then the word of God would prevail much more!

IV. A RIOT AT EPHEBUS

Acts 19:21-41: ²¹*After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. “After I have been there,” he said, “I must visit Rome also.”* ²²*He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.*

²³*About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.*

²⁴*A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen.* ²⁵*He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: “Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.*

²⁶*And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.* ²⁷*There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”*

²⁸*When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting:*

“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!” ²⁹*Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s*

traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. ³⁰Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. ³¹Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

³²The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. ³³The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. ³⁴But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”

³⁵The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: “Men of Ephesus, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? ³⁶Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. ³⁷You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. ³⁸If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. ³⁹If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. ⁴⁰As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today’s events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.” ⁴¹After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

A. “After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. ‘After I have been there,’ he said, ‘I must visit Rome also.’ He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.” (vv.21-22)

1. As Paul’s time in Ephesus drew to a close, he made preparations to visit Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia, and ultimately, Rome.
2. Paul’s 2½ years in Ephesus had been extremely fruitful, and many lives had been transformed through the power of the gospel. Up until this time, not much is recorded in Acts about persecutions and troubles in Ephesus, but that was about to change. And Paul made several references in his letters to the Corinthians (which was likely written during

his stay in Ephesus) about great personal hardships and dangers he faced in Ephesus:

- a) **1 Cor. 15:32:** *If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”*
- b) **2 Cor. 1:8-10:** ⁸*We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the **hardships we suffered in the province of Asia**. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we **despaired even of life**. ⁹*Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death*. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰*He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us. On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us...**
- c) **2 Cor. 11:23:** *Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, **been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again**. [NOTE: Some believe that Paul was imprisoned several times while in Ephesus, though Luke makes no mention of it in Acts.]*

B. “About that time there **arose a great disturbance about the Way**. A silversmith named Demetrius, who **made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business** for the craftsmen. He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: ‘Men, you know **we receive a good income from this business**. And you see and hear how this fellow **Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people** here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. **He says that man-made gods are no gods at all**. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.’” (vv.23-27)

1. Verses 23-41 describe a “great disturbance [lit. “tumult, commotion, stir”] **about the Way**” – the riot that ensued

was caused by the collision of light and darkness, truth and error, idolatry and the living God—*the Way!*

2. The temple of Artemis (the Greek name for the Roman goddess Diana), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was in Ephesus; Artemis was revered as the mother goddess of fertility, and a whole cult of prostitution and immoral practices was an integral part of her worship.
 3. Paul’s ministry had a profound effect on Ephesus, with many turning from their idols to the Lord; he had persuaded (“led astray!”) the people that their man-made gods were no gods at all. The spiritual awakening in the city was so widespread that it caused a business recession among the idol-makers.
 4. Demetrius, a leader and spokesman of the silversmiths (whose primary source of income was making silver shrines of Artemis: “it brought in no little business”), gathered together all his fellow craftsmen and sought to stir them up to take some definite action.
 5. Demetrius revealed his true motive when he said that their “good income” was in danger, but he sought to give it a religious coloring by pretending great reverence for Artemis and her temple: “the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty.”
 6. Behold once again the “root of all evil... the love of money!” (1 Tim. 6:10). How similar to the anger of the owners of the slave girl whom Paul delivered from a demon of divination when they “realized their hope of making money was gone” [see Acts 16:16-19 and *Section IV.C* of Part 9 on p.190].
- C. “When they heard this, they were **furious** and began **shouting: ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’** Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul’s traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater. **The assembly was in**

confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there. The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people. But when they realized he was a Jew, they all **shouted in unison for about two hours: ‘Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!’**” (vv.28-34)

1. Having heard that their income was in jeopardy, the silversmiths were “furious” [lit. “full of wrath, fierceness, and indignation, as if breathing hard”] and started a riot that turned into a mob scene in which the whole city became involved.
 2. The entire crowd shouted in unison for two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”
 - a) Here our attention is drawn to the zeal and passion with which people will worship false gods—often cutting themselves, sacrificing children, and expending great energies to please their idols!
 - b) They praised their god for two straight hours! That is impressive! How rare that modern Christians should spend more than a half an hour in a church worship service singing, praising God, and declaring His greatness. Inevitably, after 30 minutes, some begin to fidget, look at their watches, and openly display their consternation at the length of the praise service. Perhaps we need to remember the Ephesians: for TWO HOURS they never tired of declaring the greatness of a god that is NO GOD!
 3. The whole crowd was in a state of confusion—most of them didn’t even know why there were there! How often we witness this in our modern-day protests and rallies, where most of the people shouting, chanting, carting signs and posters, don’t have a clue why they are there. Of one thing we can be sure: God was NOT at work in this riot, for He is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).
- D. “The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: ‘Men of Ephesus, doesn’t all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven? Therefore, since these facts are

undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash. You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess. If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges. If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly. As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it.' After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly." (vv.35-41)

1. The city clerk finally calmed the mob, assuring them that Artemis and her temple remained intact and that Ephesus would continue to be the guardian of her great temple.
2. He reasoned with the silversmiths that if they had a grievance against Paul, they should settle it legally in the courts. Finally, the crowd dispersed.

V. PAUL IN MACEDONIA AND GREECE

Acts 20:1-6: ¹When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia. ²He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, ³where 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. ⁴He 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. ⁵These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. ⁶But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

- A. Various travels of Paul throughout Macedonia and Greece are mentioned, along with some notable co-workers who accompanied him.
- B. "These men went on ahead and waited for us...But we sailed from Philippi..." (vv.5-6)
 1. At this point, the "we/us" passages resume (and continue until Acts 21:18, restarting finally from Acts 27:1 – 28:16),

indicating that Luke had again joined Paul in his journey (the “we” passages first occurred in Acts 16:10 – 17).

2. Apparently, Paul sent the other seven brethren mentioned on ahead to Troas, while he and Luke visited Philippi. After the Days of Unleavened Bread, or the Passover, Paul and Luke sailed from Macedonia to join the others in Troas.

VI. EUTYCHUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD AT TROAS

Acts 20:7-12: 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. ⁸There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. ⁹Seated 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. ¹⁰Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!” ¹¹Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. ¹²The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.*

- A. “On the **first day of the week** we came together to break bread.” (v.7)
1. This is the earliest text from which it has been reasonably inferred that believers in the early Church met together for worship on **Sunday**, the first day of the week.
 2. Presumably in celebration and remembrance of Christ’s resurrection, which occurred on the first day of the week (Mat. 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1), Sunday became known as “**the Lord’s Day**” (Rev. 1:10), the day on which Christians would gather for corporate worship.
 3. Paul taught the churches about collections and offerings on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 4. The breaking of bread refers specifically to the Lord’s Supper, commanded by Jesus in Luke 22:19 and observed by the earliest Christians (Acts 2:42); Paul gave further instructions concerning this ordinance in his epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:17-34).

- B. Paul talked on and on past midnight, obviously having many important things to share with the believers there in Troas before leaving the next day (vv.7, 9).
- C. **Eutychus**, a young man seated in a third-story window during Paul’s address, was overcome with sleep and **fell to his death**. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, wrapped his arms around him, and he was **brought back to life** (vv.8-10)
 - 1. Eutychus was “picked up dead” (v.9), an observation which Luke, being a physician, would himself have most certainly verified.
 - 2. Luke’s description of Paul throwing himself on the young man’s body is similar to that of Elijah and Elisha raising the dead (1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34-35), confirming that his intention in giving this account was to show that a miracle had taken place.
- D. “‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he [Paul] said. ‘He’s alive!’ Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.” (vv.10-12)
 - 1. Further indication that this young man had died and had been miraculously brought back to life again;
 - 2. Paul continued preaching until morning!

VII. PAUL’S FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

Acts 20:13-38: ¹³We 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. ¹⁴When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. ¹⁵The 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. ¹⁶Paul 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.

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

¹⁸When 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. ¹⁹I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. ²⁰You 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. ²¹I 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. ²³I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. ²⁴However, 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. ²⁶Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

²⁷For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

²⁸Keep 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. ²⁹I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

³⁰Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. ³¹So 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. ³³I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. ³⁵In 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.”

³⁶When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

³⁷They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. ³⁸What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

A. Intentionally bypassing Ephesus because he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost, Paul and his companions sailed to **Miletus**, a city on the coast about 35 miles south of Ephesus. (vv.13-16)

B. “From Miletus, **Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church**. 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. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews. 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. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.’” (vv.17-21)

1. Known as Paul’s farewell address to the Ephesian elders, verses 17-35 give us some amazing insights into the heart and life of this great man of God. The address also highlights the importance of church leaders and leadership.
2. Paul called for the “**elders**” [Gk. *presbuteros* = “seniors, elders”], whom he later calls “**overseers**” [Gk. *episkopos* = “bishop, superintendent, officer in general charge of the church”] and “**shepherds**” [Gk. *poimaino* = “to feed, tend or rule as a shepherd or supervisor”] in v.28; contrary to distinctions made in modern Christian circles, Paul used the terms elder, pastor, bishop and overseer interchangeably—they are synonymous biblical titles.
3. Paul made reference, first and foremost, to his manner of life, service, humility, tears, tests and trials and then to his preaching.
 - a) Service, humility, tears, tests and trials—this is the stuff of true gospel ministry—NOT fame, power, success, popularity, money, limelight, or a host of other vanities that many a preacher has fallen prey to!
 - b) “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you.” – Paul’s life *was* his message (1 Thess. 2:1-12; 2 Tim. 3:10-14; Phil. 3:17; 4:9; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 1:12).
 - c) Paul’s main message: “Turn to God in **repentance** and have **faith** in our Lord **Jesus**.” How simple!
4. Paul held back nothing in his preaching and teaching that would be helpful to the Ephesians’ spiritual growth and welfare—“**publicly** and from **house to house**.” The apostles’ ministry, like Christ’s, was open and public;

it was not something hidden or done in secret, nor did they only preach to big crowds in the synagogues—they were not “above” going house to house with their message:

- a) **John 18:19-21:** ¹⁹*Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching.* ²⁰**“I have spoken openly to the world,”** Jesus replied. *“I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret.* ²¹*Why question Me? Ask those who heard Me. Surely they know what I said.”*
 - b) **Mat. 10:27:** *What I tell you in the dark, **speak in the daylight**; what is whispered in your ear, **proclaim from the roofs.***
 - c) **Acts 18:28:** *For he [Apollos] vigorously refuted the Jews **in public debate**, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ...*
 - d) “House to house” (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 10:22; 16:15, 34).
5. **“To both Jews and Greeks...”** – Paul’s ministry was without prejudice or any discrimination based on nationality or religious background—he had no “favorites” or exclusive cliques that he catered to.
- C. **“And now, **compelled by the Spirit**, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the **Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.** 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.”** (vv.22-24)
1. “Compelled” [lit. “bound”] by the Spirit, Paul was going to Jerusalem, not knowing exactly what awaited him there (although the Holy Spirit had already warned him of prison and hardships that he would face).
 - a) Paul’s trip to Jerusalem was not against the direction of the Holy Spirit;
 - b) Paul admitted that the Holy Spirit had not revealed to him exactly what would happen to him in Jerusalem (that would occur later through the prophet Agabus);

but He had already given Paul a general warning that prison and troubles were coming;

- c) When the Holy Spirit later spoke through the prophet Agabus (Acts 21:10-14), warning Paul that the Jews in Jerusalem would “bind” [same Greek word used in Acts 20:22] him hand and foot, it was not a prohibition from the Spirit, simply a revelation of the trouble that awaited him there.
2. “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.” (v.24)
- a) “However” [“**But none of these things move me**” – KJV] – Paul could not be moved or turned aside from his one goal—to complete what Christ had called him to do;
 - b) This one verse gives us important insights into Paul’s mindset and motivation, which can be summarized as follows:
 - (1) Despite persecutions, oppositions, dangers and imprisonments, Paul had already counted the cost of following Christ and had come to one firm decision—he was ready and willing to lay down his life for the Lord in utter self-denial; no sacrifice would be too great for the One who gave His all on the cross;
 - (2) Paul saw himself as a runner in a race, a metaphor he often used in his writings (1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 4:6-8); he understood a powerful truth: it doesn’t matter how a runner *starts* a race, only how he *finishes* it!
 - (3) He kept his eyes fixed on the “task” [Gk. *diakonia* = “ministry, service”] assigned him by the Lord Jesus—to **testify to the gospel of God’s grace**.
- D. “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that **I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.**” (vv.25-27)

1. Paul gave his final farewell, convinced that he would never see them again. There is some debate whether or not he did actually visit Ephesus again later on after his Roman imprisonment, the last record that Luke gives of Paul's activities (Acts 28).
2. Paul had served God with a clear conscience, knowing that he had not held back from declaring the whole counsel of God to them; because of that, he was innocent of any *blood-guiltiness* [see *Section X.D.3* of Part 9 on p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**]*—*he was blameless because he had done his duty in delivering God's word, thus clearing himself from any responsibility:

Acts 18:6: *But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."*

- E. **“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! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. 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.” (vv.28-32)

1. Paul charges these watchmen to watch over themselves (first) and (then) all the flock; note the order—pay close attention to your own spiritual life, then you will be able to take care of the church (most ministers get it wrong—they get so busy with the work of the church that they neglect their own life with God and end up in burnout or moral collapse). Consider the following:
 - a) **1 Tim. 4:12-16:** ¹²*Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.* ¹³*Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.* ¹⁴**Do not neglect your gift**, which was given you

through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

- b) **John 17:18-19 (NKJV):** *¹⁸As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*
- c) **1 Cor. 9:27 (NKJV):** *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*
2. Paul reminded the pastors and elders of Ephesus that they had not chosen themselves for this work, neither had they been elected or appointed by the local congregation—it was the Holy Spirit who “made” [Gk. *tithemi* = “to appoint, ordain, set;” used in 1 Cor. 12:28 “*appointed* apostles...prophets...”] them overseers!
 3. The church they were shepherding is very precious: Christ bought it with His own blood.
 4. Paul gave the shepherds a sober warning to be vigilant and always on the lookout for “savage wolves”—false apostles, prophets, teachers and leaders who would try to infiltrate the church and prey upon the sheep in God’s flock. Paul promised that they would come after his departure; some would even arise from their own number, distorting the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. This was such an imminent danger and heavy burden on Paul’s heart that he reminded the elders how he had been continually warning them about these things night and day for three years with tears. (vv.29-31)
 5. NOTE: If such was the case with one of the most spiritual churches in the New Testament, having a strong apostolic foundation and deep revelation of Christ, are we so naïve to think that our modern churches are not vulnerable to such attacks from the enemy?
 6. Paul was leaving, wolves were coming—what could he do? He committed these church leaders to God and to the word

of His grace, which could build them up and give them an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. In other words, Paul was entrusting the elders into God's hands, confident that the inspired Scriptures were totally sufficient to keep them, build them up and equip them for their ministries:

2 Tim. 3:15-17: ¹⁵*How from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* ¹⁷*so that **the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***

- F. **“I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing.** You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 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.’” (vv.33-35)
1. In closing his message, Paul once again reminded the elders of the example of his own personal life and ministry.
 2. Paul had not used the ministry as a means to financial gain. Quite the contrary! Although, as an apostle, he had a right to receive financial support from the churches, he chose to work when necessary in order to supply his own needs and the needs of his companions.
 3. But he even went beyond that, working as a tentmaker so that he might have the means to help the “weak” [Gk. *astheneo* = “feeble, diseased, sick, impotent”—the disabled, elderly or others who were incapable of caring for themselves.
 4. “Remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: **‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’**” Interestingly enough, these words are not found in any of the Gospels, even though they represent the sum of much of Christ’s teaching.
 5. How different Paul’s lifestyle and example from that of many slick radio and TV preachers who prey on unsuspecting souls, making up stories and crying crocodile tears to fleece the flock of their money. Like Balaam, the darkest condemnation and judgment awaits them:

2 Pet. 2:3 (NLT): *In their greed [false prophets] they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money [“make merchandise of you” – KJV]. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.*

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

VIII. PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM

Acts 21:1-16: ¹After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. ²We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. ³After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. ⁵But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. ⁶After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

⁷We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.

⁸Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

¹⁰After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, “The Holy Spirit says, ‘In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’”

¹²When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³Then Paul answered, “Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

¹⁴When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, “The Lord’s will be done.”

¹⁵After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

A. After we had **torn ourselves away from them...**" (v.1)

1. They had all wept as Paul and the others departed.
2. But here we learn that it was equally emotional for Paul and his companions, who literally felt like they were being "torn away."
3. Behold how they loved one another—how the believers and elders loved Paul, and how he deeply loved the churches!

1 Thess. 2:6-20: ⁶We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else. As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, ⁷but **we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children.**

⁸We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because **you had become so dear to us.** ⁹Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹For you know that **we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children,** ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory. ¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe...

¹⁷But, brothers, **when we were torn away from you** for a short time (in person, not in thought), **out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you.** ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us. ¹⁹For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? ²⁰Indeed, **you are our glory and joy.**

- B. Sailing to Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia and Syria, Paul and company finally landed at Tyre. Finding some disciples there, they stayed with them for seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem, but Paul would not be dissuaded, they continued from Tyre on to Ptolemais, where they stayed for one day. (vv.1-7)
1. The first of two warnings not to go to Jerusalem “through the Spirit” came to Paul through the disciples in Tyre.
 2. This raises the question as to whether Paul was deliberately disobedient in going to Jerusalem, whether he unwittingly failed to discern the mind of the Lord, or whether he was actually in the will of God in going. He felt “compelled by the Spirit” to go to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22), so he was obviously not being disobedient to the Spirit. It is not clear if Paul actually recognized that these warnings were given through the Spirit. Paul may have interpreted the advice of his friends as calculated to save him from physical suffering or even death. In his love for his Jewish countrymen, he did not feel that his physical well-being was the important consideration, as he had already stated in Acts 20:24.
- C. “Leaving the next day, **we reached Caesarea** and stayed at the house of **Philip the evangelist**, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. After we had been there a number of days, a **prophet named Agabus** came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says, “In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.’” When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, ‘The Lord’s will be done.’ (vv.8-14)
1. They came to Caesarea and stayed with Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven (Acts chs. 6 & 8).
 2. His four daughters *prophesied*, not to be confused with the office of a *prophet*, seen in the next verse...

3. Agabus the prophet (first seen in Acts 11:27-30, where he predicted a severe famine in the Roman world), brought the second warning from the Holy Spirit for Paul not to go to Jerusalem; but Paul was resolute, even if it meant prison or death.
4. “When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, **‘The Lord’s will be done.’**” (v.14)
 - a) This may indicate that they finally recognized that it was the Lord’s will for Paul to go to Jerusalem.
 - b) And the Lord would later affirm Paul’s trip to Jerusalem:

Acts 23:11: *The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, “Take courage! As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.”*

- D. “After this, **we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.** Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.” (vv.15-16)

IX. CONCLUSION

- A. On his third and final missionary journey, Paul concentrated most of his efforts in Ephesus, spending almost three years establishing the church there. It was a very fruitful investment, and multitudes throughout Asia Minor forsook their idols and turned to the Living God. God used Paul to raise up a large number of elders in the region to carry on his gospel work, and Paul’s farewell address to those elders is a classic worthy of careful study by every pastor and church leader to this day.
- B. Ephesus, like many other places the apostles had visited experienced two things: REVIVAL and RIOTS! Whenever the gospel is preached with power and it is confirmed with signs and wonders, there is a clash between light and darkness. God confirmed the ministry of Paul with extraordinary signs and miracles, so that even cloths that he had touched were taken to the sick and demon-possessed, and they were cured. And as God had used the apostle Peter to raise Dorcas from death to life, He worked mightily through the apostle Paul to raise Eutychus from the dead in Troas.

- C. An important co-laborer named Apollos joined the apostolic team, first meeting Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and then moving on to Corinth, where he would work closely and extensively with the apostle Paul.
- D. Paul's third apostolic mission ends with his arrival in Jerusalem. Despite numerous warnings about hardships and imprisonments that awaited him in Jerusalem, he could not be dissuaded from going there. The remainder of Acts deals with his arrest, trials and imprisonment in Rome. This will be the topic of study in the next part of our study

