

Paul's Third Missionary Journey Part III

Return trip to Macedonia & Achaia

(Acts 20:1-16)

Introduction:

1. Paul's three year ministry in Ephesus was very effective:
 - He meets up with some of the disciples of John the Baptist and teaches them about the significance of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. After they believed in Christ, Paul baptizes them and lays hands on them.
 - Paul preaches in the Jewish synagogue and although his message was not well received, he goes to the School of Tyrannus where he is provided a platform to preach and teach of Jesus Christ on a daily basis.
 - Eventually the ministry at Ephesus becomes so effective that Luke records; "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greek"
 - Paul will write his first letter to the Corinthians from Ephesus
 - Many churches (i.e. Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis) throughout Asia are started as a result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus.
2. As the ministry in Ephesus comes to a close, and the riots had ceased; Paul will gather the disciples together to encourage and exhort them to remain faithful to the Lord.
3. Paul's will then leave for the city of Troas (II Corinthians 2:12-13, 7:5-7)

Paul visits Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-4)

1. Luke provides very little information about this visit by Paul to Macedonia, but we can fill in the blanks by reading; II Corinthians 2:12-13, 7:5-7, Romans 15:9, 25-27.
 - Paul will initially leave Ephesus and go to Troas in the hopes to meet up with Titus there.
 - 1) Apparently Titus does not show up in Troas and this has Paul concerned (II Corinthians 2:12-13). Most conclude that Paul may have felt some sort of harm (perhaps thieves or bandits may have attacked him since he was carrying the offering that was being collected for the saints at Jerusalem) had come to Titus and he was deeply troubled.
 - 2) Paul apparently had planned on ministering there in Troas for a season but those plans were put on hold as Paul felt compelled to press on to Macedonia and Achaia which is where Luke picks up the narrative. (Acts 20:1-2)
 - While in the region of Macedonia (Acts 20:1-2), Paul accomplishes the following:
 - 1) He probably writes his second letter to the Corinthians during this time.
 - 2) He will branch out a little farther north into **Illyricum** which is also called **Dalmatia** (II Timothy 4:10), and we know it as modern day **Yugoslavia** (*now the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, and the latest independent republic of Kosovo*).
 - 3) He will encourage and exhort the saints to remain faithful, and to give of their resources to help the needy in the church at Jerusalem.

2. Paul's visit to Achaia is also briefly mentioned by Luke (Acts 20:2b-3)
 - Paul will remain in Achaia (primarily at Corinth) for 3 months and continue with his exhortation of the saints there – as it appears from his letters to them that they needed it!
 - **During this 3 month stay he will write his letter to the Roman Christians. (See Romans 15:23-16:2)**
3. Paul apparently had planned to set sail for Syria. (Acts 20:3)
 - He uncovers some sort of a plot (by the Jews at Corinth) to have him arrested, or killed while on the ship. Some conclude a group of Jews planned to assassinate Paul while they were at sea and then simply dispose of his body and be rid of him.
 - 1) Luke doesn't tell us the reason behind this plot, but it may be in response to Paul's previous visit to Corinth in which two key leaders of the synagogue converted to faith in Christ, as well as their defeat at the trial before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia. (See Acts 18:12-17)
 - 2) Paul somehow becomes aware of this plot and decides to return to Jerusalem by going back through Macedonia and then sails from Philippi to Troas.
 - Paul had planned to be in Jerusalem for the Passover but this little detour kept him from making that goal. He does however plan to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost which was celebrated 50 days after Passover. (See Acts 20:16)
4. Paul returns to Macedonia and will eventually meet up with the group of men (Acts 20:4), who were charged with the collection of the offering in the region of Macedonia, for the Jerusalem church. Paul, Luke, and possibly Titus remain in Philippi to celebrate Passover, while the rest of the party goes to Troas. After this, Paul, Luke and Titus will sail to Troas. (Acts 20:5-6)

Paul visits Troas (Acts 20:5-12)

1. Take note of the model that seems to establish a “normal pattern” for the New Testament Christian worship service. (Acts 20:7-8)
 - They met on _____ (the first day of the week), which became the normal meeting day of the apostolic (New Testament) church.
 - 1) Justin Martyr (a second century apologist) wrote; “Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because.....Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead” (*First Apology*, LXVII; [reprint; Grand Rapids; Eerdmans: 1973], 1:186)
 - 2) Ignatius (another second century apologist) wrote; “Let every friend of Christ keep the Lord’s Day as a festival, the resurrection day, the queen and chief of all days” (*Epistle to the Magnesians, IX; The Ante-Nicene Fathers* [reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973], 1:63)
 - They met together in an upper room of a _____ (Acts 20:8)
 - 1) This also became some what of a pattern for the early church (Romans 16:5, I Corinthians 16:19, Colossians 4:15, Philemon 2)
 - 2) The formal meeting within a “church building” came about sometime around the third century according to historical and archeological records.
 - The purpose of this meeting (in similar fashion to the gathering in Acts 2:42), was the breaking of bread, fellowship and preaching sound doctrine. (Acts 20:7-8)

2. Luke records the events that occur as Paul preaches at this house church in Troas. (Acts 20:8-12)

- Paul had an obvious _____ for the church and it shows in his willingness to teach and preach even into the late hour.
 - 1) Luke tells us; “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight” (Acts 20:7)
 - 2) Paul knew that he would be leaving Troas and perhaps he even knew he wouldn’t be returning – so he may have wanted to pack in as much teaching of truth as he could to aid in their spiritual growth.
 - 3) We don’t know why he prolonged his message until midnight; (perhaps many of the people worked during the day), but whatever the reason he felt compelled to speak into the late hour.
- Luke does not record the content of Paul’s message but he does tell of a significant event that occurs while Paul is preaching – **a young man named Eutychus falls out a window and dies.**
 - 1) We can only assume that the reason Luke tells us there were “many lamps in the upper room” is because that was the cause of Eutychus falling asleep (the lamps would have drained the oxygen).
 - 2) It is probable that Eutychus was sitting on or near the window sill to get fresh air. At some point he falls asleep and tumbles out the window, falls three stories, and dies. (Acts 20:9)

- 3) Without a lot of fanfare – Paul embraces Eutychus (*Compare this to Elijah and Elisha; I Kings 17:21, II Kings 4:34*), and his life is restored.
 - 4) This is a miracle, as Eutychus was pronounced or declared dead by Luke who was a physician.
 - 5) The fact that God empowered Paul to bring him to life continues to remind us of the awesome power of Almighty God and His genuine love for His saints! It also adds credence to the authority of the apostles that Jesus had given to them. The raising of people from the dead is something only God can do!
- Apparently the events of Eutychus’ death and raising to life did not deter Paul from continuing in worship, or in the declaring of God’s truth for Luke tells us “When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak and left” (Acts 20:11)
 - This miraculous event brought great joy to the believers there in Troas for Luke records; “They took the boy alive, and were greatly comforted” (Acts 20:12)
3. Paul’s immense love for the church is evidenced in his passionate desire to teach and declare the truth of God’s Word no matter what the circumstances and or challenges that he faced.
 - It appears that Paul taught them all night (“until daybreak”) which not only shows Paul’s desire to impart God’s truth, but also the people of this house church felt it important to listen.
 - Perhaps this is a good lesson for us to recognize the enormous value that God’s Word brings to our lives even at the expense of our own “personal time” – be we teachers of the Word or hearers of the Word!

Paul returns to Jerusalem via Miletus (Acts 20:13-16)

1. After his time in Troas, Paul planned to return to Jerusalem to deliver the offering taken while he was in Macedonia and Achaia.
 - His initial plan was to be in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, but his prolonged stay in Troas kept that from happening. His new goal was to make it there by Pentecost (50 days after Passover). (see Acts 20:16)
 - The fact that Paul wanted to deliver this offering to the Jerusalem church is a good reminder of its significance.
 - 1) It evidenced a good connection between the believers from Greece and Asia to those in Jerusalem showing that; _____!
 - 2) It serves as a _____ for how the Christian church is to continue to care for the needs of the brethren on a global scale. This continues to be evidenced through numerous mission organizations and local churches even in our day, and should continue until Jesus comes!
2. The next stop is Assos
 - Paul will go there by land (we are not told why)
 - The others in the party (Luke, Titus, Timothy etc.) will get there by boat.
3. From Assos they (this time including Paul) will sail on to Mitylene, then to Chios (*the birthplace of Homer the Greek poet – not Homer Simpson*), then to Samos (*the birthplace of Pythagoras – the mathematician*), and finally to Miletus (about 30 miles south of Ephesus) on the mainland of Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

4. Paul intentionally sails past Ephesus and most conclude that he wanted to avoid a prolonged stay that would naturally have occurred should he had made a personal visit there. Any further significant delay may have kept him from making it to Jerusalem by Pentecost.
 - This is an obvious conclusion to draw given Paul's immense love for the people at Ephesus.
 - The other thing Paul may have considered is the potential threat to bring him harm from those in Ephesus who opposed the gospel. (Acts 19:28-34)
5. Paul will request that the Ephesian elders join him in Miletus where he will instruct them and also warn them of the coming dangers of false teaching and heresy. This will be the focus of our next lesson.....stay tuned!
6. Questions/comments: