

THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

MINISTRY IN GREECE, MACEDONIA AND ASIA, ACTS 20:1-16

- A. Paul's visited Macedonia and Achaia and then sailed to Troas (1-6)
1. Paul's final ministry in Ephesus (1), *After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia.*
 - a. Luke's account of Paul's return visit to Greece is brief so it is helpful to read Romans and 2 Corinthians written during that time.
 - b. Paul ministered to the Christians in Ephesus as soon as the riot ended.
 - c. He departed for Macedonia
 - 1) He wanted to minister in the churches that had been established.
 - 2) He wanted to collect an offering for those suffering financially in Judea as noted in Acts 19.
 - 3) He wanted to see how the church in Corinth had responded to his strong letter of concern delivered by Titus.
 - a) 1 Corinthians 1:10-11, *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers.*
 - b) 2 Corinthians 2:3-4, *And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.*
 2. Paul's ministry through Macedonia (2), *When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.*
 - a. Paul traveled to Troas, 2 Corinthians 2:12, *When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.*
 - 1) He was well received.
 - 2) He had expected to meet Titus who was not there.
 - 3) He chose not to stay in Troas but continued to Greece (Achaia where Corinth is located).
 - b. Ministry in Macedonia
 - 1) His ministry in Macedonia lasted about one year.
 - 2) Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from somewhere in Macedonia, 2 Corinthians 12:14, *Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you...*
 - 3) He may have ministered in Illyricum at this time.
 - a) It is northwest of Macedonia in what is now Albania and the former Yugoslavia.
 - b) Romans 15:19, *...so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;*
 3. Paul's ministry in Greece (3-4)
 - a) Due to a plot against Paul, he decided to return through Macedonia (3), *There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.*
 - 1) The three months were probably spent in Corinth.
 - a) He was hosted by Gaius, Romans 16:23, *Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.*
 - b) The Book of Romans was written at this time.
 - 2) He planned to leave by ship for Syria but changed plans because of a plot made against him.
 - a) He heard of a plot by Jews to kill him so he chose to go back through Macedonia.
 - b) William Barclay, *Often from foreign ports Jewish pilgrim ships left for Syria to take pilgrims to the Passover. Paul must have intended to sail on such a ship. On such a ship it would have been the easiest thing in the world for the fanatical Jews to arrange that Paul should disappear overboard and never be heard of again.*

b) Luke listed Paul's companions (4), *Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.*

- 1) The men named were representatives of the churches in the provinces of Macedonia, Galatia, and Asia who accompanied Paul with the financial gift for the Jerusalem Church.
- 2) The list of men who traveled with Paul from Corinth to Philippi.
 - a) Sopater was from Berea who may be the Sosipater of Romans 16:21, *Timothy, my fellow worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.*
 - b) Aristarchus was from Thessalonica
 - 1] He was a Greek who was part of Paul's missionary team, Acts 19:29, *So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel.*
 - 2] He was Paul's fellow-prisoner, Colossians 4:10, *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you...*
 - c) Secundus was from Thessalonica
 - d) Gaius was from Derbe
 - e) Timothy became leader of the churches of Asia after traveling with Paul.
 - f) Tychicus was from Asia
 - 1] He was possibly from Ephesus.
 - 2] He carried letters to Ephesus, Ephesians 6:21, *So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything.*
 - 3] He carried letters to Colossae, Colossians 4:7-8, *Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,*
 - g) Trophimus was from Asia was a Gentile Christian from Ephesus, Acts 21:29, *For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.*

4. Paul and his companions met in Troas (5-6)

- a) Some traveled to Troas ahead of Paul who followed a short time later (5), *These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.*
 - 1) *we*, Luke remained at Philippi in Acts 15 and probably remained there until to this point.
 - 2) They celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed immediately after Passover, in Philippi.
 - 3) Paul's companions traveled to Troas ahead of him, T. Constable, *Paul and Luke, and perhaps Titus and two other representatives of the church in Achaia (cf. 2 Cor. 8:6-24), remained in Philippi briefly.*
 - 4) Then, Paul, Luke and Titus sailed from Neapolis, the port of Philippi to Troas where they met the other messengers.

B. Paul's ministry in Troas (7-12)

1. He raised Eutychus from the dead (7-10)

- a. Paul spoke to the believers before his planned departure (7), *On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.*
 - 1) This is the first time in Scripture that a reference is clearly made that Christians were meeting on the first day of the week (Sunday) instead of on the Sabbath.
 - 2) Sunday has been the preferred meeting day since Jesus rose from the dead on that day of the week.

- 3) *to break bread*
 - a) F. F. Bruce, *The breaking of the bread probably denotes a fellowship meal in the course of which the Eucharist (communion) was celebrated (cf. 2:42).*
 - b) William Barclay, *In the early Church there were two closely related things. There was what was called the Love Feast. To it all contributed, and it was a real meal. Often it must have been the only real meal that poor slaves got all week. It was a meal when the Christians sat down and ate in loving fellowship and in sharing with each other. During it or at the end of it the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed. It may well be that we have lost something of very great value when we lost the happy fellowship and togetherness of the common meal of the Christian fellowship. It marked as nothing else could the real homeliness, the real family spirit of the Church.*
 - 4) Paul spoke to them after the meal until midnight.
 - a) A nightly meeting was the norm since slaves and workers would only be able to attend at night.
 - b) T. Constable, *Luke's references to time are Roman rather than Jewish. For him days ran from sunrise to sunrise, not from sunset to sunset (cf. vv. 7, 11).*
- b. Eutychus fell asleep during Paul's message and fell out of a window and died (8-9), ***There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.***
- 1) It appears the young man, Eutychus, fell asleep due to the length of Paul's message and the heat and lack of oxygen in the room due to the many lamps.
 - 2) The Greek word for *young man* would refer to a boy between eight and fourteen years old.
 - 3) Luke, the doctor, described his condition as dead.
 - 4) J. Vernon McGee, *I confess that Paul's experience has always been a comfort to me. When I look out at the congregation and see some brother or sister out there sound asleep, I say to myself, 'It's all right. Just let them sleep. Paul put them to sleep, too.*
- c. Paul went to Eutychus and raised him up (10), ***But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."***
- 1) Paul *bent over him*
 - a) The verb in Greek means *to embrace, lie on, to press against.*
 - b) It appears that God healed Eutychus by bodily contact with Paul instead of by a verbal command.
 - 2) Paul declared the boy was now alive.
 - a) The power of Jesus Christ worked through His apostle.
 - b) It appears Paul was a participant in the boy's healing by the direction of God.
2. He continued his ministry to the believers (11-12), ***And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.***
- a. He continued to teach until daybreak.
 - 1) They may have eaten an ordinary meal due to the time since they last ate.
 - 2) It may have been the Lord's Supper where they thanked the Lord for their time with Paul and for the resurrection of Eutychus.
 - 3) Thomas Constable, *He and the Troas Christians realized that this might be their final opportunity to meet together, so in spite of the unusual incident involving Eutychus they made the most of their opportunity.*
 - b. Paul departed and the people were comforted by Paul's teaching and the boy's restoration.
 - 1) He continued his journey to Judea.
 - 2) Richard Lenski, *They had carried him in "dead," now they brought him living and that is what filled them with so much comfort and cheer...*

C. Paul's journey from Troas to Miletus (13-16)

1. He joined his traveling companions in Assos to continue his journey by ship (13-15), *But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus.*
 - a. Paul stayed longer in Troas and then traveled by land to the port of Assos which was 20 miles from Troas.
 - b. Their voyage through the western coast of Asia.
 - 1) Mitylene was the chief city of the island of Lesbos, the largest island of the west coast of Asia.
 - 2) Chios was the main town on the island of the same name.
 - 3) Samos was an island directly west of Ephesus.
 - 4) Miletus was 30 miles south of Ephesus on the mainland.
2. Luke explained why Paul did not stop in Ephesus (16), *For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.*
 - a. Paul determined not to stop in Ephesus fearing he would not be able to leave in a timely fashion.
 - b. He hoped to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost, 50 days after Passover.
 - c. Paul was not finished ministering to the church at Ephesus as will be seen in the next lesson.

CONCLUSION

- A. Paul was an evangelist with a pastor's heart.
- B. His focus was on encouraging believers in their faith in Christ.
- C. God confirmed Paul and his message through miraculous actions.