

# ACTS

## Chapter 20

### *Through Macedonia and Greece*

When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia. <sup>2</sup> He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. <sup>6</sup> 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.

**20:1** ENCOURAGING THEM – Paul did not leave on the day of the uproar. He had been planning for some time to leave (19:21), but first he arranged for a gathering of believers at which he spoke words of encouragement and farewell. (PBC)

*said good-by and set out.* Paul wanted to: (1) leave Ephesus, (2) preach in Troas on his way to Macedonia, (3) meet Titus at Troas with a report from Corinth (see 2Co 2:12–13) and (4) continue collecting the offering for Judea (see 1Co 16:1–4; 2 Co 8:1–9:15; Ro 15:25–28).

**20:2** *He traveled through that area.* May cover a considerable period. He may have gone to Illyricum (see Ro 15:19) at this time.

**20:3** *three months.* Probably a reference to the stay in Corinth, the capital of Achaia. These would be the winter months when ships did not sail regularly. Paul probably wrote Romans at this time (see Introduction to Romans: Occasion). – Quite naturally he had to see if conditions had improved in Corinth. Factionalism there, problems with speaking in tongues, scandals, and lawsuits had compelled the apostle to write his First and Second Letters to the Corinthians, and so he stayed there for three months during the winter of A.D. 56. (LL)

*a plot against him.* The Jews were determined to take Paul's life; also, at this time he was carrying the offering for the Christians in Judea, so there would have been a temptation for theft as well. The port at Cenchrea would have provided a convenient place for Paul's enemies to detect him as he entered a ship to embark for Syria.

**20:4** These men seem to be the delegates appointed to accompany Paul and the money given for the needy in Judea (see note on 2Co 8:23). Three were from Macedonia, two

from Galatia and two from Asia. Luke may have joined them at Philippi (“we sailed,” v. 6; see note on 16:10).

*Sopater*. May be the same as Sosipater (Ro 16:21).

*Aristarchus*. See note on 19:29.

*Secundus*. Not mentioned elsewhere. His name means “second,” as Tertius (see Ro 16:22) means “third” and Quartus (see Ro 16:23) means “fourth.”

*Gaius from Derbe*. A Gaius from Macedonia was associated with Aristarchus (see 9:29), but the grouping of the names in pairs (after the reference to Sopater) indicates that this Gaius was associated with Roman Galatia and is different from the Macedonian Gaius.

*Timothy*. May have represented more than one particular church. He was from Lystra but had been responsible for working in other churches (1Co 16:10–11; Php 2:19–23). He had been sent to Macedonia before Paul left Ephesus (19:22).

*Tychicus*. A constant help to Paul, especially in association with the churches of Asia (Eph 6:21–22; Col 4:7–9; 2Ti 4:12; Tit 3:12).

*Trophimus*. Appears again in 21:29 (see 2Ti 4:20). He was an Ephesian, and it is implied that he was a Gentile.

**20:5** *Troas*. Was to be the rendezvous for Paul and those who went on ahead by sea from Neapolis, the seaport of Philippi (16:11). Paul and his immediate companions stayed in Philippi before sailing a week later.

**20:6** *from Philippi*. From the seaport, Neapolis, about ten miles away.

*Feast of Unleavened Bread*. Began with Passover and lasted a week. Paul spent the period in Philippi. Formerly he had hoped to reach Jerusalem sooner (see 19:21), but now he hoped to arrive there for Pentecost (see 20:16). – Passover was also the anniversary of the Lord’s resurrection, and the Jewish Christians who observed Passover were certainly conscious of that. (PBC)

*five days later*. The voyage from Neapolis to Troas took five days. It had taken about two days the other direction (16:11).

*seven days*. Although Paul was in a hurry to arrive at Jerusalem by Pentecost, he remained seven days at Troas. This might have been because of a ship schedule, but more likely the delay was in order to meet with the believers on the first day of the week to break bread.

### *Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas*

<sup>7</sup> **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.** <sup>8</sup> **There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.** <sup>9</sup> **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.** <sup>10</sup> **Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!”** <sup>11</sup> **Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until**

**daylight, he left.** <sup>12</sup> **The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.**

**20:7** *first day of the week.* Sunday. Although some maintain that they met on Saturday evening since the Jewish day began at six o'clock the previous evening, there is no indication that Luke is using the Jewish method of reporting time to tell of happenings in this Hellenistic city. *to break bread.* Here indicates the Lord's Supper, since breaking bread was the expressed purpose for this formal gathering. The Lord's Supper had been commanded (Lk 22:19), and it was observed regularly (see 2:42).

**20:8** **MANY LAMPS** – The many lamps would tend to make the room hot and stuffy. Even people who are interested in hearing a message from God's word can grow sleepy under such conditions. (PBC)

**20:9** *Eutychus.* A name common among the freedman class (see note on 6:9).

**20:10** *He's alive!* As Peter had raised Tabitha (9:40), so Paul raised Eutychus.

**20:12** **GREATLY COMFORTED** – The people had heard the message of God's grace from Paul. They had seen a demonstration of God's power to raise the dead. They took comfort from both. (PBC)

### *Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders*

<sup>13</sup> **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.** <sup>14</sup> **When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene.** <sup>15</sup> **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.** <sup>16</sup> **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.** <sup>17</sup> **From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.** <sup>18</sup> **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.** <sup>19</sup> **I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.** <sup>20</sup> **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.** <sup>21</sup> **I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.** <sup>22</sup> **"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.** <sup>23</sup> **I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.** <sup>24</sup> **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.** <sup>25</sup> **"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.** <sup>26</sup> **Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.** <sup>27</sup> **For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.** <sup>28</sup> **Keep watch over yourselves and all the**

flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. <sup>a</sup> Be shepherds of the church of God, <sup>b</sup> which he bought with his own blood. <sup>29</sup> I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. <sup>30</sup> Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. <sup>31</sup> So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. <sup>32</sup> “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. <sup>33</sup> I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup> You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. <sup>35</sup> 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.’” <sup>36</sup> When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. <sup>37</sup> They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. <sup>38</sup> What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

**20:13** *Assos*. On the opposite side of the peninsula from Troas—about 20 miles away by land. The coastline, however, was about 40 miles. Thus Paul was not far behind the ship that sailed around the peninsula.

**20:14** *Mitylene*. After the first day of sailing, they put into this harbor on the southeast shore of the island of Lesbos.

**20:15** *Kios*. The second night they spent off the shore of this larger island, which lay along the west coast of Asia Minor.

*Samos*. Crossing the mouth of the bay that leads to Ephesus, they came on the third day to Samos, one of the most important islands in the Aegean.

*Miletus*. Thirty miles south of Ephesus, the destination of the ship Paul was on. He would have had to change ships to put into Ephesus, which would have lost time (see v. 16). If he had come to Ephesus, he would have had to visit a number of families, which would have taken more time. If trouble should arise, as the riot of a year ago (19:23–41), even more time would be lost. It could not be risked.

**20:16** *by the day of Pentecost*. Fifty days from Passover. Five days plus seven days (v. 6) plus four days (vv. 13–15) had already gone by, leaving only about two-thirds of the time for the remainder of the trip.

**20:17** *elders of the church*. The importance of the leadership of elders has been evident throughout Paul’s ministry. He had delivered the famine gift from the church at Antioch to the elders of the Jerusalem church (11:30). He had appointed elders on his first missionary journey (see 14:23) and had addressed the holders of this office later in Philippi (Php 1:1, “overseers”). He requested the Ephesian elders to meet with him on this solemn occasion (see v. 28). Some years later he wrote down instruction about the elders’ qualifications (1Ti 3; Tit 1). – The church at Ephesus was made up of a number of local churches or congregations. The elders were the leaders of those churches, men chosen for their mature judgment and spiritual knowledge. They were “overseers” and

“shepherds”. That can only mean that they carried out the pastoral ministry in those churches. (PBC)

**20:19** *with tears*. See v. 31. Paul’s ministry at Ephesus was conducted with emotional fervency and a sense of urgency. – Perhaps he sometimes worked himself to exhaustion in trying to prepare them for their work as overseers of the flock. In their work they must never forget his warnings. (PBC)

**20:22** *compelled by the Spirit*. Paul did not go to Jerusalem against the direction of the Spirit, as some have suggested, but because of the guidance of the Spirit. People pleaded with him not to go (21:4, 12), not because the Spirit prohibited his going but because the Spirit revealed the capture that awaited him there (21:11–12).

**20:25** *none of you ... will ever see me again*. Not a message from God but what Paul anticipated. He had been mistaken before in his plans: He had intended to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, but he had to leave earlier (see v. 1; 1Co 16:8–9). His prophetic power was not used to foresee his own future, just as his healing power was not used to heal his own disease (see 2Co 12:7–9). As it turned out, it seems that Paul did revisit Ephesus (see 1Ti 1:3).

**20:26** INNOCENT OF THE BLOOD OF ALL – He was saying that no one would go to eternal death because Paul had failed to preach the truth to him. (PBC)

**20:28** *overseers. Be shepherds*. The “elders” (v. 17) were called “overseers” and told to pastor (“shepherd”) the flock—demonstrating that the same men could be called “elders,” “overseers” or “pastors.” *his own blood*. Lit. “the blood of his own one,” a term of endearment (such as “his own dear one,” referring to his own Son).

**20:31** *three years*. See note on 19:10.

**20:32** COMMIT YOU TO GOD – Who could keep the elders faithful in their work and protect the church from the savage wolves? Only God. How would God do that? Through the word of grace, the Scriptures. (PBC)

*are sanctified*. † Justified through faith (see 26:18; see also note on 1Co 1:2).

**20:34** *supplied my own needs*. Paul had worked in Thessalonica (1Th 2:9) and Corinth (Ac 18:3).

**20:35** HELP THE WEAK – The “weak” here probably means those who are weak in understanding, people who would not realize that they ought to be helping support those who preach the gospel. (PBC)

*remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said*. A formula regularly used in the early church to introduce a quotation from Jesus (1 Clement 46:7). This is a rare instance of a saying of Jesus not found in the canonical Gospels.