

Acts 20: PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED

Introduction

Acts 20 continues the account of Paul's third missionary journey. Chapter 19 ended with the account of the uproar in Ephesus which was brought about by the negative impact of the gospel on the people profiting from idol worshiping. After this, Paul then met with the disciples in Ephesus and encouraged them, said goodbye, and left for Macedonia, accompanied by Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus. They visited the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea before he made his way to Corinth. After a brief time there, Paul sought to go back to Syria but was stopped short when he discovered a plot against his life.

Paul then retraced his steps back through Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, stopping in Troas where he stayed for seven days. Led by the Holy Spirit to go to Jerusalem and eager to be there for Pentecost, Paul bypassed Ephesus knowing that he would need to stay there longer than he had time, so he called for the Ephesian elders to come and meet him in Miletus.

This meeting was difficult for all the disciples and elders because Paul knew he was saying goodbye for the last time. In fact, a great portion of Acts 20 is devoted to his emotional, heartfelt farewell speech to the Ephesian Elders. The speech reveals so much about Paul's feelings, experiences, fears, and concerns for the future of the church.

Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Acts 20:1-38

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

Think Through the Following Questions

1. What do we learn about Paul's commitment to the great commission in spite of the constant danger to his life?
2. The story about Eutychus' fall and resurrection seems to come out of nowhere; why do you think Luke included it in this passage?
3. What do we learn about Paul's strategy from his heartfelt message to the church leaders in Ephesus? (Verses 20 and 21)
4. What does Paul's message teach us about hardships, trials, and ministry? Is this particular only to Paul or applicable to us today? How can this equip us for our own faith journey?
5. What does Paul's message teach us about the responsibilities of Bible teachers and leaders?
6. Why was Paul so afraid of false teachers? Is the problem of false teachers and false teachings relevant today?
7. What strategies does Paul suggest to guard against false teachings within the church?
8. What other lessons about Christian leadership does Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders teach us?

Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?

Application: How do you think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?