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ACTS 20

Paul in Macedonia and Greece

Before we start this chapter, I personally think it would be helpful to put into context what has happened or happening at this time in the new Church spread across Asia, or Asia Minor as it is sometimes called and Greece. The perspective is from several vantage points all talking about the same people, places and sometimes events. What these men endured was incredible.

The gaps of the Acts of the Apostles can be aided by several letters that Paul wrote and messages he received from disciples that had gone out at Paul's direction to specific cities: IE: Thessalonica, Ephesus, Corinth. To put it into context I am going to read from Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers. Where Ellicott references certain scripture that pinpoint a location, I am going to read those, so we have the context not only of Acts but why, when and where Paul and the other Disciples wrote to the various churches. Those letters are sometimes called the Epistles of Paul as well as other Disciples. Epistle means "letter, message, dispatch". As we read study Acts, written by Luke, it seems like there is something missing. What was going on behind the scenes with Paul and other disciples. We are not told outrightly

but there was ongoing communication all over Asia between Paul and these other disciples, whether by mouth or letter we don't know but as we look deeper into Acts and the letters Paul wrote we get a clearer picture. Paul was under incredible pressure and persecution that we really can't see by just reading one book then another. We must integrate the books into a timeline to really understand the magnitude of Paul and the Disciples Work in Christ.

If at the end you are confused, I apologize, but it will require your concentration. By looking at it this way we will see the pain and loneliness Paul endured. How valuable his friends were to him and gave him strength to continue the fight, all coordinated by the Holy Spirit.

“Departed for to go into Macedonia.--We are able from the Epistles to the Corinthians to fill up the gap left in the narrative of the Acts. Having sent Timotheus and Erastus to see after the discipline of the Church of Corinth ([Acts 19:17](#)),”

Acts 19:17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

We can look at what Paul wrote to Timothy about what Timothy would need to do to be a good pastor in Ephesus.

2 Timothy 4: Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Acts 19:17 involves the Sons of Sceva as a reference point.

the Apostle (meaning Paul) was cheered by the coming of Stephanas and his two companions ([1Corinthians 16:17](#)), and apparently wrote by them what is now the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 16:17 I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.

A previous Epistle had been sent, probably by Timothy, to which he refers in [1Corinthians 4:17](#).

1 Corinthians 4:17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

When he wrote that Epistle he intended to press on quickly and complete in person the work which it was to begin ([1Corinthians 4:18-19](#)).

1 Corinthians 4: [18](#)Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. [19](#)But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power

He was led, however, to change his purpose, and to take the land journey through Macedonia instead of going by sea to Corinth ([2Corinthians 1:16-17](#)), and so from Corinth to Macedonia, as he had at first intended.

2 Corinthians 1: [16](#)And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. [17](#)When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I

purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?

A brief description of this last two verses. Paul had to change his plans, and some were quite upset about it and in a manner threw in his face what Christ had said:

Matthew 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

So, Paul was refuting the allegation that he had not kept his word about coming to them.

He was anxious to know the effect of his letter before he took any further action, and Titus, who probably accompanied the bearers of that letter, was charged to hasten back to Troas with his report. On coming to Troas, however, he did not find him, and after waiting for some time in vain ([2Corinthians 2:12](#)), the anxiety told upon his health.

2 Corinthians 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

He despaired of life and felt as if the sentence of death was passed on him ([2Corinthians 1:8-10](#);

2 Corinthians 1:8 [8](#)For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: [9](#)But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: [10](#)Who

delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

[2Corinthians 4:10-11](#)).

2 Corinthians 4:10always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ***11***For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The mysterious thorn in the flesh "buffeted" him with more severity than ever ([2Corinthians 12:7](#)).

2 Corinthians 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

He pressed on, however, to Macedonia ([2Corinthians 2:13](#)), probably to Philippi, as being the first of the churches he had planted, where he would find loving friends and the "beloved physician," whose services he now needed more than ever.

2 Corinthians 2:13 I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

There, or elsewhere in Macedonia, Titus joined him, and brought tidings that partly cheered him, partly roused his indignation. There had been repentance and reformation where he most wished to see them, on the one hand ([2Corinthians 6:6-12](#));

2 Corinthians 6:6By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, ***7***By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ***8***By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good

report: as deceivers, and yet true; 9As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; 10As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

11O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. 12Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

I only mention this to give us a better sense of what Paul's life was like with all the anger towards him directed by Satan. I liken what he was enduring to what Trump is enduring with constant attacks on him. I say this only as something we see rather than read to understand the despair that Paul was feeling.

on the other, his enemies said bitter things of him, sneered at his bodily infirmities ([2Corinthians 10:10](#)),

2 Corinthians 10: For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

and compared, to his disparagement, the credentials which Apollos had presented ([2Corinthians 3:1](#)) with his lack of them.

2 Corinthians 3:1 Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

The result was that Titus was sent back with the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, accompanied by some other disciple (probably St. Luke, but see Notes on [2Corinthians 8:18-19](#)),

2 Corinthians 8:18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; **19** And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

the Apostle resolving to wait till they had brought matters into better order and had collected what had been laid up in store for the Church of Jerusalem, so that it might be ready for him on his arrival ([2Corinthians 9:5](#)).

2 Corinthians 9:5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness.

A brief explanation of this verse. It appears that the Corinthian church was given to exaggerate their generosity as a means of getting something more in return. Paul is warning them to keep to their promise of what they were going to donate to the Jerusalem Church freely with no thought of something in return.

At or about this time also, to judge from the numerous parallelisms of thought and language between it and the Epistles to the Corinthians on the one hand, and that to the Romans on the other, we must place the date of the Epistle to the Galatians.

According to the chronological order chart the year 57 AD is identified as the year in which Paul wrote to the Galatians.

*(See **Introduction** to that Epistle.) Probably after Titus and Luke had left, and before Timotheus had returned--when he was alone, with no one to share the labour of writing, or to give help and counsel--tidings came that the Judaizing teachers had been there also, and had been only too successful. How the tidings reached him we do not know, but if the purple-seller of Thyatira was still at Philippi, she might naturally be in receipt of communications from that city, and it was near enough to Galatia to know what was passing there. . . .”* **End of quoting Ellicott.**

Why does it matter when these things took place. In the entire scheme of things probably not that much, but in an effort to understand the Bible as God delivered it to us, it matters a great deal. When we drill down into specifics, we not only see the Hand of God directing Paul and the other Apostles, but we can also see God’s protection of them as they are assaulted and cursed by Jews and gentiles alike.

Could any of us endure what Paul and the apostles and disciples endured. Certainly not without God’s calling on our lives for a specific mission and not without God’s Hand of Protection.

Perhaps a day is coming when we will have to endure persecution. It seems so remote but our brothers and sisters around the world this very day are being persecuted, jail and killed for their refusing to deny Jesus. On just that point alone would you die today for the name of Jesus?

1And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

This uproar in Ephesus by all appearances was headed toward physically attacking Paul and his fellow servants. As the local town leader calmed the crowds down it seemed like a good time to Paul and the disciples to leave Ephesus and go to calmer circumstances in Macedonia. Macedonia is a region of northern Greece. Again, crossing the Aegean Sea landing likely in a port several hundred miles north of Athens in the port of Thessalonica.

2And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

Paul would travel around to the cities he had witnessed in, and local congregations were started. His purpose was to exhort the Believers to walk with Christ. Paul went from northern Greece south to Athens and Corinth during this trip.

3And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

As a note it was during these 3 months in Corinth that Paul wrote the letter to the Romans, circa AD 57.

The Jews in Corinth had argued with the Jewish Believers for some time, and it was apparent to them that these Jewish

Believers put a great deal of trust into what Paul taught. That irritated the nonbelieving Jews and their hatred was directed at Paul. So, Paul would logically be target as this Jesus that Paul taught was nowhere to be seen. When you can't kill the message kill the messenger. That is and has been Satan's plan since Christ rose from the grave.

Again, to be clear, Paul after leaving Ephesus and threat of death went across the Aegean Sea to Thessalonica in the area called Macedonia which is northern Greece. He then traveled in Greece to Berea, Athens, and Corinth where another plot to kill him arose.

4And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

This is a list of Paul's companions that were with him at this point of his 3 Missionary Journey.

When the plot to kill Paul was revealed in Corinth, the group traveled by land north back to Thessalonica, and onto Philippi. Some of the group sailed before Paul did back to Troas and waited for him and Luke there.

5These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened

bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

The cruise from Philippi to Troas took 5 days. Paul and the entire group then stayed an additional 7 days in Troas.

Eutychus Raised from the Dead

(John 11:38-44)

7And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Of course, in Christianity without Biblical mandate the Christian churches set aside Sunday as the day to Worship Christ. Sunday is the first day of the week according to the Bible. Saturday is the Biblical Sabbath and that has not changed. However, for Christian Believers we get to worship Christ through our relationship with Him every day of the week.

8And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. 9And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

These verses the 9th and 10th are a bit confusing unless we simply take them as written. The young man Eutychus died from the fall

and God through his apostle Paul raised him back to life. The challenge comes from Luke's statement that Eutychus "and was taken up dead". The taken-up part indicates that some of those there lifted up the dead body of Eutychus, the Greek term used in Strong's Concordance is:

Transliteration: airó

Phonetic Spelling: (ah'-ee-ro)

Definition: to raise, take up, lift

Usage: I raise, lift up, take away, remove.

Then we go to the next verse and find this.

10And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

We might come to one of two conclusions. Either he was dead and Paul's touch through the power of God caused the man's heart to restart. Or the man was not dead but knocked unconscious and when Paul laid on him, he could feel his heartbeat and told those present to relax, he was not dead but his life (heartbeat) was still present.

There is no more context to glean from these verses. On the one hand the pronouncement is; "**was taken up dead**" and in the next verse Paul says; "**Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.**" The event of raising from the dead is not a lite matter in any context. A person being knocked out and coming to is a bit less of

a weighty matter. We just don't know from the context, so to deny a miracle would be unwise, we simply accept the Word of God and accept that a miracle occurred for Eutychus.

11When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. 12And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

This verse gives a bit more context that goes beyond the idea the Paul said, "his life is still in him", to recognizing that his life had been taken from him as in "death" and returned to him through the Power of God and a useful vessel Paul. The last part of the verse is a little odd in its construction. In our English vernacular we would say that "And they brought the young man alive and all were greatly comforted".

From Troas to Miletus

13And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

So, the bulk of the group including Luke took a boat from Troas to Assos, but Paul chose to walk. The walk is reported to take 10 hours. With Luke the writer we do not know what happened during Paul's 10 hour walk. Conjecture would tell us that Paul as with Jesus when He withdrew from others had time to talk with

God without interruption. Being recharge, reinvigorated by speaking directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, Creator of all things.

14And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

Mitylene is an island off the coast of Asia directly west of Pergamum in the Aegean Sea.

15And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios;

Another Aegean Sea Island just west of Smyrna.

and the next *day* we arrived at Samos,

Samos another Aegean Sea Island west of Ephesus. However, in the next part of the verse they went on the mainland of Asia at Trogyllium and ended up in Miletus on the Coast directly south of Ephesus.

and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus. 16For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

It tells us Paul had decided to bypass Ephesus, but I would rather think that the Holy Spirit directed Paul away from the evil that had beset him there. It is not that God can't protect Paul; it is more

likely a timing issue with God. God had things well in hand, He used attacks against His Own Prophet to bring about His Plan.

God would later use John the Apostle to write a letter to the Ephesian church. God would tell them that He appreciated their dedication to seeking the truth and revealing false teachers and prophets, but He had one thing against them.

Q. Can anyone tell us what that one thing God had against the Ephesians was?

They had lost their first love.

Their first love was Christ and Salvation through Him. They had fallen into the church trap of worrying more about the process than the Person of Jesus Christ and their personal relationship with HIM.

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

17And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Paul had a message to the Believers in Ephesus but rather than stir up a hornets nest wisdom dictated that the Elders of the church came to him.

18And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after

**what manner I have been with you at all seasons,
19Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with
many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the
lying in wait of the Jews: 20And how I kept back nothing
that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and
have taught you publickly, and from house to house,**

I think this is another notation that this Ephesus church and other early churches did not have buildings to meet in but rather met in smaller groups in homes. These various home groups were overseen by local appointed Elders. These Elders had been appointed by Paul and the other disciples. Paul spent his last 3 years teaching and helping put together these home groups. If you will note that it is not the church on 5th street or the one on Main St, it is always to THE church in Ephesus. I believe it is more justification that the True Church of Jesus Christ is first a relationship with Him. And secondly a relationship with other Believers in your neighborhood or town. The first relationship is the foundation, the cornerstone that was intended for all Believers. The second one was never intended to be churches called by various names; Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Mormon. God's plan that man has so well destroyed through the creation of manmade churches, was to have One Church worldwide, meeting together in small groups all under the Headship of Jesus Christ. God had instituted Elders and Deacons, Pastors, Teachers but

not to create manmade churches but to shepherd His Church, the Body of Christ our Lord. UNITED under one banner; Jesus Christ.

21Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

The key to the Living Church (Capital C) was based on repentance to God and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Not complicated, not divided, no denominational, not chaotic, but a simple relationship with our Lord and Savior, Studying His Word to be approved workmen for the Kingdom of God.

I don't think it has headquarters, 501 c3's, merchandise for sale, huge buildings with extravagant sound and video systems. It is just Believers, meeting over God's Word growing each person's relationship with Christ daily by studying His Word daily individually then coming together corporately to fellowship.

22And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Paul recognizes he is on a trajectory that he may not desire in the flesh, but he is convinced that God through the Power of the Holy Spirit has him set on a mission; first to Jerusalem then to the unknown.

23Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

Shortly in Acts 21 a Prophet of God will tell Paul his plight.

Acts 21:11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

25And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Even before the prophecy in Acts 21 God had revealed in Paul's Spirit that he would not return here to his beloved brethren in Ephesus or Asia.

26Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. 27For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

The issue Paul faced in the ministry God gave him is like the ministry God has given all of us. We are to be watchmen. Paul has declared he did as he was told and warned the gentile and jews of the coming sword and their blood in on their own hands.

Ezekiel 33:6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the

sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

Luke 12: [35](#)Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; [36](#)And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. [37](#)Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. [38](#)And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

The judgement seat of Christ called the Bema Seat Judgement will likely ask that question of us all. It is not a question of Salvation because if you are at the Bema Seat, then you were saved and now give an account of your life. Not for Salvation but for rewards in Heaven.

[28](#)Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Paul is directing this at the leadership, overseers of the home fellowship in Ephesus. They are to feed the sheep which is the Church (Capital C), also called the Body of Christ. If a leader today is not feeding the sheep with the Truth, wow unto him. If a fellowship has stepped away from God's Word denying the Truth, wow unto those leaders for they have led many to destruction.

29For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

There is a systematic destruction of those who chose to not follow God's Word. They first begin to pick and choose what they believe from God's Word. It starts innocently enough but left unchecked it charts a course for destruction. Once they have departed from the True Word of God it is only a matter of time for the wolves to come in and destroy any thing of Truth. The most horrific worldly actions today seem to stem around another Satanic device; deviant behavior within the Body of Christ. More specifically the acceptance of homosexuality and the promotion of it and all its tentacles that infect the world today. Sexual deviance was low hanging fruit for Satan to use against man both saved and unsaved. The sin of sexual impurity seems to be the most prolific action Satan has at his disposal. That coupled with denominationalism (manmade churches) have destroyed the local fellowship.

30Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Paul is talking to the Elders, men of character who were selected by Paul and the Disciples. He is telling them prophetically "also of your own selves" meaning from within the ranks of the leadership.

These men leaders of the local fellowship will; “speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”.

The evidence of this exact thing happening worldwide is prolific, it is everywhere in every denomination. I wouldn't even know where to start.

31Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Paul prays for their very souls. He prays that they would cling to God's Grace.

33I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. 34Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. 35I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Paul was known for working for his own food and care. He admonishes these Elders to follow that example and not expect anyone else to take care of your needs. That is your responsibility and no one else's. But in that same note, we are to help those

who cannot help themselves, we are to be gracious and giving to those in need.

36And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, 38Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

Paul would never return to Ephesus or anywhere in Asia, he knew it and their hearts agreed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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