

# OpenTheo

## Acts 20



### Acts - Steve Gregg

In Acts 20, Paul delivers a discourse to the Christian leaders in Ephesus, urging them to watch over their lives and shepherd their church. He emphasizes the importance of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, and warns of the presence of wolves who will draw away disciples with perverse teachings. Paul also encourages collection among the churches to help support the Jewish church and promote unity, and expresses his intention to deliver a gift offering to the church in Jerusalem.

### Transcript

Alright, today we are turning to Acts chapter 20. This chapter contains the only discourse in the book of Acts that was given to a Christian audience. Isn't that interesting? The book is about the history of the church, and yet we have no discourses that are addressed to the church.

We have discourses addressed to the Jews, addressed in the synagogues, addressed in the Areopagus to the pagans, addressed to the Sanhedrin. But of all the addresses recorded in the book of Acts, none is addressed to Christians, except the one in this particular chapter, which is addressed to the elders of the church of Ephesus. Now Paul is traveling, and we see that at the end of chapter 19, he has reason to leave Ephesus, and he does leave Ephesus in the opening verses of chapter 20.

He has been between two and three years in Ephesus ministering there. It's been a hard time, we know because of his epistles, especially statements he made in 1 Corinthians 15 and in 2 Corinthians chapter 1, which speak about his experience in Ephesus. He says he was near death, that he had despaired of his life, that he had trials that were off the charts, beyond measure.

And he also, on the other hand, we're told, was blessed with the ability to do unusual miracles while he was there in Ephesus. Now Paul worked miracles lots of places, but the ones in Ephesus were unusually, apparently unusually numerous, and also unusual in terms of their nature, for example. Things could be taken from him to people who were sick, and when they received them, they'd be healed.

Or if they were demon-possessed, and things from Paul were taken, demons would come out of them. Now that kind of miracle is not recorded of the apostles anywhere else in the book of Acts, and Luke himself says in verse 11 of chapter 19, these were special, unusual miracles. So there's unusual miraculous activity and unusual hardship for Paul in these two or three years he spent in Ephesus.

At the end of that time, there's a great riot, which was not caused by him, but it was precipitated by his rejection of idolatry, and by the silversmiths of Ephesus who made their living making silver shrines for the goddess Artemis, who's also called Diana. And they decided that if Paul continued to be as successful in his evangelistic work in Ephesus, they would be out of a job soon. So they stirred up the pagans to riot, and it was such a violent situation that hardly anyone was able to address the mob, and Paul wanted to, but his own friends wouldn't let him go up there, because it was in the theater there, they were afraid he'd be pulled apart and killed.

But the city manager, the city clerk, eventually stood up and rebuked the mob for their misbehavior, and the riot ended there at the end of chapter 19. But Paul had already, before this riot occurred, he'd already decided that he was leaving Ephesus, and this simply became the occasion for him to do it more abruptly. We read back in chapter 19 in verse 21, this is before that riot occurred, it says, When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in his spirit, or in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia to go to Jerusalem, saying, after I've been there, I must also see Rome.

So even before these special troubles arose at the end of his stay in Ephesus, he had already made up his mind. I'm going to go to Macedonia and Achaia, which are of course Greece, northern and southern Greece, and then I'm going to go to Jerusalem, then I'm going to go to Rome. So his travel plans were already set, and in fact, in chapter 19 verse 22, he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he stayed in Asia for a little while.

So he had already not only decided he's going to Macedonia, he'd already sent a team forward to prepare the way for him. So his leaving Ephesus was not caused by this riot, but it was something that he'd already planned to do. Now after the riot is over, chapter 20 verse 1 says, after the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to him, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia, which of course was already in his plans.

Now when he got to Macedonia, he wrote the book 2 Corinthians. He wrote the book 1 Corinthians during his stay in Ephesus. And when he left Ephesus and came to Macedonia, he wrote the book 2 Corinthians.

How do we know that? Because in 2 Corinthians he talks about this. He talks about how he had been in Ephesus, and then he came to Macedonia, and from there he wrote the letter. So you can dovetail Paul's letters and the references to his travels in his letters

with his actual, the record of his travels by Luke.

Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece. Now technically Macedonia is Greece, it's northern Greece. Achaia was the province in the south of Greece.

But Greece was a popular term for Achaia. So he obviously distinguishes between what he calls Macedonia and what he calls Greece, meaning that he's using the word Greece here in the popular sense of just referring to the southern district, southern province, which is called Achaia. That's where Corinth was.

That may be the only church in Achaia. Athens was in Achaia, but Paul had not, as far as we can tell, established a church in Athens, though he had visited there. There was probably a church in Centria, which was near, it was kind of, it was almost the same as Corinth.

It was a seaport for Corinth. But it says he stayed three months in Achaia, which would have to be basically in Corinth. So after he sent his two epistles to the Corinthians, he did go and spend another three months with them, which was probably the last he ever saw of those people.

He probably stayed the winter because he was intending to sail to Jerusalem. As we know, his stated plans already were given to us back in chapter 19. But there was a certain time of the year people just didn't sail on the high seas in the wintertime.

I think it was sometime after November or something. There's a certain date, I believe, in October, November, that after that point, you don't sail. I mean, except to save your life, maybe, but you just, it's not traveling time by sea.

And so he was probably wintering in Corinth. He stayed there for three months, and it was while he was there he wrote the book of Romans. And in the book of Romans, he mentions the same travel plans that we've already read about it in chapter 19.

He says, I'm on my way to Jerusalem. And when I get there, I'm going to deliver this gift of this offering that I've taken up for the Jerusalem church. Then I'm going to go to Spain, but I'm going to go through Rome to get to Spain.

So Paul, when he wrote Romans, was planning to go immediately to Jerusalem, and then he hoped to be there only a brief while, and then go back to Rome and then Spain. And that visit to Rome that he anticipated would be his first time there. In Romans, he says, I for a long time, I've wanted to come to your church and visit you, but I haven't been able to.

And he says in chapter 15 of Romans, the reason I haven't been able to is because I'm committed to preaching the gospel where no one has preached yet. And Rome has

already had somebody preach there because there was a church there. So I've been, he says, I've been preaching in all the area from Jerusalem around to Illyricum, which is like modern.

Well, I don't know what it is now. It was Yugoslavia when I was growing up, up north of Greece. He says, I've reached all that area now, and there's nowhere else for me to go except to you.

So I'm going to Jerusalem first thing and come to you, Rome. That's what he says in Romans. And that was his plan while he was there in Corinth.

And he does mention that he is in Asia or that he's in Achaia, almost certainly Corinth when he wrote Romans. Now, Romans 16, 1, by the way, if you're wondering, how do we know he was there when he wrote it in Romans 16, 1? He said, I commend to you, Phoebe, our sister, who is a servant of the church of Centuria, that you may receive her in the Lord. Now, Centuria was the seaport of Corinth.

And Phoebe was a deaconess in the Greek. It says a deaconess of the church in Centuria. She apparently was traveling and probably carrying the letter.

You know, they didn't have postal service back then. We take an awful lot of things for granted. If you wanted to send a letter across internationally, you had to find somebody who's going there, who would be willing to carry it for you and give it to the people you wanted to go to.

And so a lot of times in Paul's letters, he mentions to his readers, the person who's carrying the letter, introducing them, basically, you know, saying this is a trusted person. They'll tell you more about what I'm doing when they arrive and so forth. But the letter was apparently carried by Phoebe, who is a deaconess in Centuria, which is a seaport of Corinth.

Most naturally, Paul would be sending this then from Corinth as Phoebe is making a trip to Rome. And so she would carry his letter. Now, after three months, it says when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Now, notice he was about to sail. He was going to get on a ship and go to Syria, which is Antioch, his home church. Antioch was in Syria.

So that's why he was going there. Then he was going to go to Jerusalem. But when he was planning to sail to Syria, he found out that there was a plot of the Jews against him, and he decided not to take ship after all.

And instead, he went over land back up north into northern Greece and took ship from another harbor. Now, what apparently is going on here, it's approximately, in all

likelihood, Passover time that he's hoping to get to Jerusalem for. He may not get to Jerusalem for it, but it's around the Passover season.

Now, Jews from all over the world would be traveling to Jerusalem. So it'd be easy to find a ship that way because a lot of Jews from Achaia would be going that way. The problem is if the Jews are plotting to kill Paul, he doesn't want to be on a ship full of Jews.

It'd be so easy for them to kill him and throw him overboard and be done with him. You don't want to be stuck on a small boat with a bunch of people who are plotting to kill you. So when he heard that they were plotting to kill him, he decided, I don't think I'll take the boat.

I think I'll travel north through Macedonia again. And so that's why his plans changed there in verse 3. Verse 4, and Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia. Now, he went up through Macedonia.

He's going to go back to Asia that's crossing that smaller sea, the Aegean Sea, to go back to Troas. Troas is the port in Asia that he's going to go back to. And he's going to travel from Philippi.

He's going up into Philippi and then over to the coast 10 miles, then taking a ship over to Troas and he'd be in Asia. Now, accompanying him on this trip to Asia was a man named Sopater who was an agent of the church of Berea, but also some from other churches. Also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians.

So the Thessalonian church was sending some delegates also with Paul. And Gaius of Derbe. Now, Derbe was of course in Galatia, but apparently Gaius was traveling with Paul or had met up with Paul in Greece.

And Timothy, who was from Lystra. Antikycus and Trofimus of Asia. These two men were from Ephesus in Asia.

Now, Paul had this rather large team and there was almost certainly Titus who was with them too. It's interesting that Titus is never mentioned in the book of Acts. Just like Luke is never mentioned by name in the book of Acts.

And if not for better reasons to believe it was Luke, one could suggest maybe Titus is the author because he doesn't mention himself by name. But Luke doesn't either and there's much better evidence for it being Luke. But I don't know why Luke doesn't mention Titus by name because Titus was surely there.

We know that in the Corinthian epistles, Paul talks about Titus having a major role in carrying messages between Paul in Ephesus and Corinth back and forth. The letters of Paul. And Titus of course is very significant later on.

The book of Titus is written to him as Paul left him in Crete to establish elders in the churches and so forth. So, Titus was a guy we know and are pretty familiar with from the epistles. But he's never mentioned by name in the book of Acts and I can't give a reason for that.

Nobody knows what the reason would be. Maybe he asked Luke to leave his name out of it. I don't know.

Titus was probably in this bunch too. Hard to say. But you can see that Paul's traveling with a group of men, representatives from several of the areas where he ministered.

A few from Galatia, which would be Gaius and Timothy. A few from Macedonia, which would be Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica. And also Sopater from Berea, that's from Macedonia.

And then there's a couple of guys from Asia, from Ephesus, Tychicus and Trophimus. So he's got representatives of all the regions he's been ministering to. And the reason for this could be multiple.

He could be doing it just because he wants to stay accountable. That is, he's a single man traveling alone. It's always nice to have other men around to just keep your mind on the things your mind is supposed to be on.

But more than that, the book of Acts has not highlighted this as the epistles of Paul do. And that is that throughout this time, Paul is visiting these churches not only to help establish the churches, but to pick up from them a collection that he had urged them to take among themselves, which was going to be delivered to the saints in Jerusalem who were suffering economic hardship. The reason for this was twofold.

Of course, you give gifts to people who are in economic hardship because they're in economic hardship. So I mean, part of it is simply charitable. The other part is that Paul was hoping that by bringing gifts from the Gentile churches and giving them to the Jewish church, this would help patch up relations which were always tenuous between the Jewish church and the Gentile churches.

The Jewish church recognized the Gentile churches and vice versa. But there was always that cultural difference. There's always that kind of below the surface feeling that, you know, the Jews, Jewish church, they keep all the laws.

They keep kosher. They're temple centered, even as Christians. But the Gentiles, they're not into any of that stuff.

And there's always that danger that Jewish Christians will kind of, you know, not officially, but just personally, kind of look down a little bit on the Gentiles. And there's always this strife underlying the surface, if not erupting from time to time above,

between Paul, who was characterized by his Gentile mission, on the one hand, and the Jerusalem church. And we see that when Paul actually comes to Jerusalem, we read that James says, you know, there's a lot of brothers here who've been hearing that you are, you know, they've heard rumors about you, that you're teaching Jews not to circumcise their children and they don't like you.

Well, that's just the problem. Paul knew very well, Judaizers from Jerusalem were coming a lot of times to his Gentile churches and trying to undermine him. There were issues between the Gentile churches and the Jewish church.

Officially, they recognized each other, but personally, they had issues with each other. And Paul, I think he actually states this in Romans chapter 15. He hoped that this generous gift from the Gentile churches given to the Jewish church would hopefully help improve relations, that the Jewish church would have gratitude and more appreciation for the Gentile churches.

So the gift was to help the poor, but it's also to help unity between the two sectors of the church. And Paul was very interested in this. In Corinthians, 1 Corinthians in particular, he urges the Corinthians to make sure the gift is ready when he comes.

And there are other references to the gift. In 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and 9, for example, two chapters are devoted to this urging them to get their gift together. And it's clear from Paul's letters because he says the churches in Macedonia gave generously.

This we find in 2 Corinthians 8. He said the Macedonian churches had given generously. He's urging Achaia, Corinth to do the same. So Paul's got this collection from several churches.

And note there are representatives of those churches traveling with him, which again would be helpful to avoid any accusations being made about him. He's traveling with a lot of money. For one thing, having a lot of people with you might be a way to protect it from theft.

But more than that, it's a way to protect Paul from being accused of misappropriating these gifts. There were known cases of misappropriation of monies in this kind of a situation. There's a known case that Josephus talks about that happened, frankly, a little earlier than this, just a few years before this in Paul's life.

There were two Jewish men who came to Rome claiming to be teachers of proselytes. And there was a Roman senator's wife who became a Jewish proselyte and became a student of these two Jewish guys. And they persuaded her to give them a very large sum of money to take to donate to the temple in Jerusalem.

And then they misappropriated. They just took off and never heard from again. The money never got to Jerusalem.

Well, because the victim was a wife of a senator, it became a scandalous thing. And so all the Romans knew about such things. These guys claimed they're taking money to Jerusalem for the temple.

And look, they took it for themselves. And that was not too long before this. So Paul claims he's taking money from the Gentile churches to the church in Jerusalem.

He wanted to make sure there were plenty of people who could vouch for him. So the very churches that gave the gifts probably, some of them sent some of their members along with Paul. And I'm sure Paul wanted them to, so that he could make it very obvious.

I didn't touch this money. These guys were with me the whole time. So they don't all travel together to Troas, however.

They do from that point on. We read here, after these names are given, these men, verse 5, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. That means that all these men listed went ahead of Paul and Luke to Troas.

And Paul and Luke stayed in Philippi, apparently, until after the Days of Unleavened Bread, which is Passover. So it says, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Now, it says in verse 6 that after the Days of Unleavened Bread, Luke and Paul rejoined the team in Troas.

They sailed. It would appear that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a time when Luke, who had been closely associated with Philippi the whole time, wanted to be with the church for whatever celebrations they had during that time. And Paul, since he was available, decided to be there too.

The rest of his team were dispensable in terms of whatever celebrations were going on in Philippi, so they sent them on ahead to Troas to wait for them. Luke, you remember, was probably the de facto leader of the church in Philippi. Paul had established it by his preaching, but Paul had been run out of town.

That's where he was put in jail, and they beat him without asking if he was a Roman citizen. And he left. He and Silas and Timothy left.

They left Luke there. And all this other time, Luke's been there. Luke is no doubt the man that Paul left in charge of the infant church in Philippi, and he's been there for probably years at this time.

And so Luke is very connected with the church. And he and Paul, therefore, celebrate the Days of Unleavened Bread with that church. And then they take ship, and they sail across the Aegean Sea and meet their friends who have preceded them there to Troas.



Now, it's interesting. It took them five days to sail across. I say it's interesting because when they were going the other direction, across the same stretch of sea, in chapter 16, verse 11, when they first crossed over from Troas to Neapolis, which was the port for Philippi, when they went west, it took them two days.

When they made the same trip east, it took five days. So they must have been going against pretty strong headwinds in this particular case. Or they had great tailwinds the first time, one way or the other.

It took more than twice as long to cover the same distance going east this time. Now, they stayed in Troas for seven days. Troas now has a church.

We don't read previous to this of a church being established in Troas. The only other time we read about Troas in Acts was before Paul and Silas went to Europe when they crossed over from Troas. But we don't read that they preached in Troas.

They probably did, but we don't read of it. And therefore, we have a church there that must have gotten started without being on record. And they stay with that church for seven days, during which time something interesting happens.

A guy dies, and Paul raises him from the dead. Now, on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep, and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down, fell on him, and embraced him and said, Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.

Now, when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted. So, he spent seven days in Troas.

The most notable thing happened on the last day he was there, just before he left. It was a Sunday, the first day of the week. Now, it says it was the first day of the week they gathered to break bread.

This is the only reference in the book of Acts to Christians meeting on Sunday. And there are no other mentions in the whole Bible of the Christians meeting on Sunday. Now, it is true that in 1 Corinthians 16, Paul tells the Corinthians when he's talking about taking the collection, On the first day of the week, I want you to put aside some money, and when I come, I'll pick it up to take to Jerusalem.

He says to put it aside on the first day of the week, and some people assume that that

means at a church service they take an offering. And that could be. But he doesn't specify that they're at a church service.

You could put money away, you could put money aside every, you know, at home. Every week, remember to put some aside on the first day. But it is very possible, maybe probable, that this was at a Christian meeting that Paul expected the first day of the week they put money aside.

We do know that by the end of the first century, the Christians were regularly meeting on Sunday. The first day of the week, they did so as a celebration of the resurrection of Christ. The Jewish church may also have kept a Sabbath, but that wouldn't be on Sunday.

In later Christian history, traditionally, a pope declared that Sunday is the new Sabbath. And therefore, Christians since that time have usually thought of Sunday as the Sabbath. In the Bible, however, the Sabbath is not Sunday.

The Sabbath is Saturday. When Paul goes into a synagogue and it says he went in on the Sabbath day, it means Saturday. That's when the Jews were there.

That's where he went to preach. Sunday was never the Sabbath, but it did become the traditional day of meeting for the Christians. Now, some people say, well, then we should be meeting on Saturday because that's the Sabbath.

That raises questions about whether we're supposed to keep the Sabbath. In my opinion, the New Testament does not teach that Christians are required to keep the Sabbath on any given day. If we did, it'd be Saturday because that is the Sabbath and there's never been any other day called the Sabbath in Scripture.

It's a pope and not Scripture that said that Sunday is the new Sabbath. But regardless, I don't believe Sunday is the new Sabbath, but I still acknowledge Christians have traditionally met on Sunday and they have no reason not to. And keeping the Sabbath is not required.

Of Christians in the New Testament. But it was a celebration the first day of the week of the resurrection of Christ. And we know that Justin Martyr, just less than a century later, wrote about Christian worship taking place on Sunday.

And some would say that when John in Revelation speaks of the Lord's day, he says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. That he means Sunday because in later Christian literature, Sunday was called the Lord's day. Whether John used it that way that early or whether that was a later development in Christian usage, we don't know.

In any case, we know that very early on, maybe even in apostolic times, the church began to meet regularly on Sunday. You remember the church in Jerusalem met every day. The church in Jerusalem in Acts chapter 2 and 3 and 4 and 5, they met daily in the

temple and house to house breaking bread and so forth.

So they didn't have one day of the week that was their day of worship originally. But apparently it became convenient or whatever for Christians to meet, have a main meeting once a week on Sunday. Now it says this was the first day of the week and they met to break bread.

And this is sometimes indicated as a proof that at this early point, Christians already had adopted the policy of Sunday meetings. And they may have. It may be saying that.

Although it doesn't say they did this every Sunday. It says Paul was leaving the next day. It happened to be the first day of the week.

That might be incidental to the story. They gathered to break bread. It's very clear they're having a meal.

They weren't just having a Eucharistic service because they ate and drank and so forth, even after Paul preached. And they had eaten and stuff, it says. So this could have been a weekly service that Paul happened to be available for or maybe that they met every day.

But this one happened to be the first day of the week and it's mentioned only incidentally. I may not care anything about that, but those who try to establish that there's a Sunday pattern of meetings for Christians from the apostolic times would use this verse. What I'm saying is you can't necessarily prove it from this verse, but it may be true.

Now this man Eutychus fell asleep in the window. Now Luke doesn't blame it on Paul preaching a long time. He mentions that Paul preached a long time.

It was around midnight when this guy fell asleep. But he seems to blame it on the fact there are a lot of lamps in the room. There's a whole verse devoted to the fact there are many oil lamps in the room.

So it was kind of musty and hot and flickering light plays on the eyes and so forth. And just the lamps in the room seem to have contributed to, as he says, Eutychus slipping into a deep sleep. Sinking into a deep sleep.

And he was sitting in an open window. Imagine how those who weren't near the window were handling things. If it's musty and stuffy in the room and the guy in the window is affected, then the people who weren't in the window would probably be having a hard time keeping their eyes open too.

But he happened to be in a precarious position. When he fell asleep, he fell out the window. There's a third story.

And he died. Now when Paul goes down there and throws himself over and says, don't worry, his life is in him. Some people say, well, oh, he wasn't dead.

They thought he was dead. But upon examination, Paul announced, no, he's still alive. His life is still in him.

But that's not how Luke intends it. Because Luke says he fell down from there and he was taken up dead. So Luke, a doctor, pronounced him dead on arrival.

But Paul stretched himself over him. That's what Elijah did over a dead body of a boy. He stretched his body over him.

And then he, apparently the guy started breathing again. And then Paul said, oh, his life is in him. And we read that the boy was okay.

So this was quite an exciting thing to happen at a church service. And it's the only case we know of of Paul raising the dead. We know Peter raised the dead in chapter 9. And now we see Paul raises the dead.

So again, virtually every kind of miracle that Peter did is recorded also of Paul somewhere in the record. So Paul finished preaching. They finished eating.

And then the next morning, Paul left. So they're leaving Troas. Verse 13.

Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos. This is about 20 miles from Troas. For some reason, Paul decided to walk.

He sent his team ahead on a ship, but he decided to walk the 20 miles. Probably just want some time alone. Just wanted to reflect and pray, perhaps.

We're not told why he chose to walk. Maybe he just needed to stretch. But he says, we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos.

And there, intending to take Paul on board, for he had given orders intending himself to go on foot. And when we met him at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mytilene. Now, Mytilene was another 44 miles down the coast.

We're going down the western coast of Asia Minor, which is Turkey today. And Troas is near the top. 20 miles further south is Assos.

44 miles further south is Mytilene. And Paul rode the ship that 44 miles and the rest of the journey. We sailed from there.

By the way, Mytilene is on an island. The island is called Lesbos. L-E-S-B-O-S.

So they didn't go ashore at that point. They just went to an island. They probably took on supplies and things there, which is why it's mentioned that they went there.

We sailed from there, and the next day we came opposite Chios. And the following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllum. The next day we came to Miletus.

Now, Chios and Samos are both also islands. They're offshore from Asia Minor. And as you follow dot to dot their journey, they're moving to go around the southern tip of the continent.

They're trying to move around the southern tip of Asia Minor. And by the time they get to Samos, they pretty much have cleared it. And now they're going to be going pretty much east to get to their destination in the Middle East.

But they did land at Miletus, which is about 30 miles south of Ephesus. That means they sailed past Ephesus. They started out north of Ephesus and landed at Miletus, 30 miles south of Ephesus.

And the reason for that is given in verse 16. For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia. For he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Now, we saw back in verse 6, the days of unleavened bread were passed. Now, that's in April. And now he wants to be in mid-June, I think, to Jerusalem.

So he's got, it can be done, but he's got to hurry a little bit. The fact that he wanted to makes it surprising that he spent seven days in Troas. There must have been good reason to minister there for that long.

And he's going to spend seven days in another location, too, before he gets to Jerusalem. But we'll get there when we get there. That's going to be entire.

But he didn't want to stop in Ephesus because he knew it would detain him. Apparently, he thought it would detain him longer than the time it would take to bring the elders of Ephesus down to Miletus to see him. For that, he'd have to send a messenger up to Ephesus, 30 miles, and then bring the elders down to him.

Because he called for the elders to come to him. He wanted to speak to him, but didn't want to go into town because he knew he'd get involved and he would not get away quickly. He'd spent three years in Ephesus.

And we know that, you know, there'd be a lot of people wanting him to come and speak and want to see him and want to host him. And he just, it would be a hard thing to get through there quickly. So he passed Ephesus and sent messengers back to Ephesus that the elders of the church should come down to him in Miletus.

Now, 30 miles is more than a day's walk, probably two days each way. So by the time the elders got there, Paul had already lost four days, maybe five. Yet, he apparently

thought being in Ephesus would take longer than that.

He'd have a hard time getting out of Ephesus in five days. So this is what he chose. But as I say, this address that he gave to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus is the only address in the book of Acts addressed to Christians.

And it's not every Christian, it's basically Christian leaders, the elders of the church. It says, from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, and here's his speech, which is most of the rest of the chapter.

You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials, which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews, and how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So he now speaks, he begins by speaking of the past, their past knowledge of him. From the first day I came to you, you were able to watch my life.

You saw that I operated humbly and did not impose upon you. And I suffered a great deal, especially from the Jews when I was there. You've seen all that.

And yet, despite the dangers and the difficulties, I did not stop preaching regularly to you publicly and from house to house. Again, they have the two kinds of meetings. The house meetings would be probably the real fellowship meetings.

And the public teaching would be no doubt the gathering of all the house meetings into one larger venue. For a public meeting. And so the church had both the large and the small meetings, as many churches today do.

He said what he was testifying when he preached and taught was essentially repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. So this is essentially what the Bible repeatedly tells us. Jesus in his first recorded sermon, which is only one verse long, which is probably a summary in Mark chapter one, verse 15.

Jesus said the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, therefore, and believe the gospel. So repent and believe.

There's the gospel was an announcement. The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand and an imperative.

Information and a requirement attached to it. The information is the kingdom of God is at hand. The requirement, repent and believe.

And apparently these many years later, Paul is still preaching that same message.

Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the necessities of conversion to repent and believe.

Notice that repentance is mentioned first and faith second in both cases. And later also in Hebrews chapter six, when Paul's listing what he calls the foundational things. In Hebrews six, three and following he talked of four.

No, I'm sorry. It's the opening for the first three verses of Hebrews six. He says not laying again the foundations of repentance from dead works and faith toward God.

And he lists four other things. Baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection and judgment is the foundations. But the first two foundational things are repentance and faith.

Notice that repentance is first, faith is second. Not only, you know, in mention, but in experience. Now it might seem strange to say that you repent before you believe.

But faith here refers to saving faith. Before there is saving faith, there's intellectual faith. The devil has that.

The devil believes and trembles. But he has never repented and come into a saving relationship of faith with God. He's not trusting God.

Saving faith isn't just the same thing as believing there's a God. Satan believes that and almost everybody in the world believes that. There's a God.

But repentance brings you into a saving faith. That is, repentance means to change the mind. And you're converted to Christ when you change your mind about who it is you're going to trust.

Before you've trusted Christ, you've trusted somebody else. Yourself, your parents, the government, the military, the banks, you know, your business or whatever. You trust something for your life.

But when you become a Christian, you change your mind and say, no, I'm going to trust Christ now. It's going to be all about him. So coming into saving faith from a simple academic awareness and belief that there's a God or that Jesus is real.

Requires a shift. And that shift is called repentance. It's changing your mind.

And so these two are mentioned together repeatedly and with repentance in the first position. Because repentance logically brings you into saving faith. You have to change your mind from whatever it was you're thinking before.

In order to think rightly and trust God. 22. And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem.

Not knowing the things that will happen to me, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city saying that chains and tribulations await me. Now, we do not read of any of the times previous to this point that the Holy Spirit has given that testimony. We do read of a couple of times later than this.

When he comes to Tyre and also when Agabus visits him in Caesarea. Twice the Holy Spirit is going to warn him about troubles he's going to meet, chains and so forth. But apparently, not on the record, there have been other occasions previous to this where the Holy Spirit everywhere Paul goes says, You go to Jerusalem, you're going to be in chains, you're going to be in prison.

Then I wonder why he says, I don't know what's going to happen to me then. He says, I don't know what's going to happen to me, except that the Holy Spirit says chains and prison. I think what he means is, I don't know if I'll survive.

The Holy Spirit has told me that I will be chained. I will be in prison, but the ultimate outcome, I have no idea. Will I survive? Will I die? Will I be a martyr? I don't know.

I don't know what's going to happen to me ultimately, but I do know between now and my ultimate end, there's chains and imprisonment. Because the Holy Spirit has told me that. Now, he says there, I go bound in the Spirit, which makes it sound like, you know, he feels the Holy Spirit is requiring him to go.

We saw back in chapter 19 and verse 21, it says, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. He purposed in the Spirit. Now, that phrase, purpose in the Spirit, can be translated, he purposed in his spirit.

That is to say, it's not necessarily saying the Holy Spirit was his guide in this, but in his own spirit, in his own heart, this was his dream and his determination. I want to go to Jerusalem and then Rome. So, it's not entirely clear whether it means the Holy Spirit was, in fact, guiding him to go to Jerusalem, or whether it was his own spirit.

When he says I'm bound in spirit here in chapter 20, it may simply mean I feel internally compelled in my spirit. It doesn't necessarily mean the Holy Spirit has given him guidance. In fact, he does, when he does mention the Holy Spirit, he says the Holy Spirit told me it's going to go badly when I'm there.

And we will find that Agabus is going to prophesy that Paul will be bound by the Jews when he goes to Jerusalem. But even before that, the people in Tyre are going to warn him by the Spirit not to go. It's an interesting wording, we'll encounter it in chapter 21, verse 4, that the disciples in Tyre, it says they told Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem.

Which sounds like the Spirit of God is telling him not to go. Not just that when you do go, you're going to be bound, but don't go, and if you do, you'll be bound. I mean, that's kind



of what, if you put all the material that Luke has given us together, it sounds like Paul certainly believes he's following the Holy Spirit's guidance.

But Luke seems to think, well, some of these people were telling him through the Spirit, don't go there. And if it was through the Spirit, then the Holy Spirit was telling him don't go. Whether Paul should have gone to Jerusalem or not is one of those great controversies that Christians disagree about.

Some feel like Paul could make no mistakes, and therefore he belonged there. Others feel like Luke's telling us God's trying to stop him from going, but he's determined to go because he doesn't see it as God. He doesn't see it as God stopping him.

He thinks God wants him to go. He probably thinks it's the sympathies and sentiments of his friends that don't want him to go and face prison. But when he did go there, he not only was in prison, he was detained in prison for four years.

Which means he didn't go to Rome, or Spain as he planned to, not immediately. He may have later. Well, he did go to Rome later and change, of course.

In Spain, he might have gone to as he planned to, but he was definitely detained. And there's a good argument could be made if he hadn't gone to Jerusalem, he could have gone to Rome and Spain almost immediately. And therefore, his plans that he certainly felt were from the Lord were interrupted, definitely, by his going to Jerusalem.

And perhaps he should have listened to those who said don't go. On the other hand, some say, but he wrote the four prison epistles while he was in prison in Rome or Caesarea, one or the other. And therefore, that's good.

Yeah, but he wrote a lot of epistles when he wasn't in prison, too. He could have written those prison epistles from not prison. He could have written them on a ship or from Ephesus or somewhere else or from Rome or Spain.

So, it's really an unsolvable mystery. Did God really want him to go to Jerusalem? It did not go well for him there. And it just complicated his life and took him out of circulation for several years.

And it might have been a mistake. In any case, in his own heart, he believed it was God's will at this point. But to believe that Paul could not make a mistake in guidance is to ask us to think more of Paul than the Bible tells us about him.

Any man can make mistakes. Peter made a mistake. Paul had to rebuke him publicly because of his mistake.

So, there's no reason to believe that Paul couldn't make a mistake sometimes, too. Anyway, he felt that this is what God wants him to do. Verse 24, But none of these things

move me, that is, these threats of being bound and imprisoned.

I'm not intimidated by this, nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. Now, here and only here, the gospel is called the gospel of grace or the gospel of the grace of God. Throughout Scripture, the gospel is known by many names.

Sometimes Paul just refers to it as my gospel. Sometimes he calls it the gospel of God. Sometimes he calls it the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ or the gospel of Christ.

Very often, it's referred to as the gospel of the kingdom of God. These are not different messages. These are all the same gospel.

There's only one gospel. Paul said, If anyone preaches any other gospel, let him be accursed. There's no two gospels to be permitted.

In Galatians, he said, If anyone preaches another gospel, let him be accursed. In 2 Corinthians chapter 11, he said, I fear for you that if someone preaches another gospel, you might receive it. Paul did not recognize more than one gospel, only one.

It was the gospel of God. It was the gospel of Christ. It was the gospel of the kingdom.

It was the gospel of grace, which just means the good news of grace, the good news of the kingdom. To say the gospel of grace does not mean something different, like a different message than the gospel of the kingdom. And the reason I say that is that there is a whole branch of evangelical theology that teaches there are two gospels.

There is one gospel for the Jews, which Jesus preached and which will be preached again during the tribulation, they say. That's the gospel of the kingdom of God, they say. But they say the gospel preached during the church age or the church dispensation is the gospel of grace.

They say the message is different. Since the Jews rejected Christ and his gospel of the kingdom, another gospel is preached until the end of the church age, and then the gospel of the kingdom would preach again. It's a very elaborate scheme and argued very elaborately, but it's just not true.

Again, the only time the Bible mentions the gospel of grace by that term is right here in verse 24, which Paul says that he has been testifying to the gospel of the grace of God. But look at the next verse. He says, And indeed, now I know that you all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God.

Well, is he preaching the gospel of grace or is he preaching the kingdom of God? Which is it? Well, both. It's the same gospel. There's only one gospel.

He can call it the gospel of grace because it is a message about God's grace. He can call it the gospel of the kingdom because it's also a message about God's kingdom. These are not contrary to each other.

He says in these two successive verses, he's teaching both things. They're both the same thing. He says, I know that you among whom I've gone preaching the kingdom of God will see my face no more.

Therefore, I testify to you this day that I'm innocent of the blood of all men. Probably thinking of Ezekiel, who is told by God in chapter three of Ezekiel, that if the watchman does not warn people when the danger is coming, then their blood will be on his head. But if he warns them and they don't listen, then their blood is on their own head.

God says that twice to Ezekiel. And that image seems to be in Paul's mind. I'm free of the blood.

Your blood is on your own head. I've given you everything I can give you. I've warned you.

I've told you. Night and day I've preached to you. Now I'm innocent of your blood.

It's kind of on you guys to decide how you go. I testify I'm innocent of the blood of all men for I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. That is, I've not held anything back that I knew.

Everything I knew that would be beneficial that God had said to me, I shared it with him. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood. Now, his own blood sounds like God's own blood, and this might be seen as a strong argument for the deity of Christ.

He's clearly talking about the blood of Jesus. But he says the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood, saying it would appear the blood of Jesus is the blood of God. Thus, Jesus is God.

There are some scholars, though, that say this line could be translated differently. It could be translated the blood of his own, meaning of his own son, rather than the blood of God, his own blood, rather the blood of his own, meaning Jesus, of course, but not saying necessarily that Jesus is God. It could be taken either way.

Of course, I believe Jesus is God. But even if he, even though he is, Paul might not be making that point here. The point is, we don't know exactly how he intended that last phrase, his own.

The blood of his own or his own blood are either possible translations. Now, he tells these

elders, these are the leaders of the church, to take heed to themselves, which would mean they have to watch their own lives first. Leaders of churches have to make sure that they've got their ducks in a row, make sure that they're living the way they're supposed to live first.

That's their first obligation. And secondly, to look over the church, that the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. The word overseers is episkopos, or episkopoi in the plural.

That's the word that's translated bishops in certain translations in other places, not here. Paul talks about appointing bishops in 1 Timothy 3, in verse 1. In Titus 1, he talks about appointing elders, but he starts talking about their qualifications, because a bishop must be blameless. So, Paul talks about elders as the word in the Greek is episkopoi.

Episkopoi is translated bishops in a couple of places wrongly. It has to do with the Church of England, I think, more having influence on the English translation, because they had bishops, a liturgical title. The word only means an overseer, a supervisor, someone who's watching over things.

It doesn't mean they wear pointy hats or that they have a lot of political power in the church. It just means that they're watching over things. The elders do that.

The elders are the overseers. They are the bishops, if we use that term. The elders have been made overseers of the church, and they're told to shepherd the church, which is the word pastor.

In the early church, there were no churches that had a pastor. There were churches that had pastors, plural, which were simply the elders. The word pastor, poimen in the Greek, just is the ordinary word for a shepherd.

The elders were the ones who were to oversee and to shepherd. That is, they were to be the bishops and the pastors. All these terms are interchangeable in the New Testament, and there was never a church that had just one.

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders, plural, in every church. James said, if you're sick, call for the elders, plural, of the church, singular. You find the elders of the Church of Ephesus are brought down here to talk to Paul.

Each church had elders, plural. The eldership, the group of elders, were the overseers and the pastors. They were told to shepherd.

We see Peter joining all these ideas together in 1 Peter 5. 1 Peter 5, beginning of verse 1, Peter says, The elders who are among you I exhort. In verse 2, he exhorts them, The flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, Episcopoi. So you've got elders, pastors, overseers, all the same people.

Same thing in Acts 20, in verse 28. So Paul and Peter both use the word pastor of the same people who's the overseer or bishop. And they are the same people who are called the elders.

And there are several of them, or a number of them in each church. There's not a known church in the early church that had a single individual pastor. But rather they were governed by a plurality of elders.

Whether that's necessary to observe in modern times or not is not my concern right now. But just to point it out. Verse 29, for I know this, that after my departure, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also from among yourselves, men will arise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Therefore watch and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. Now he says watch out for these wolves.

He says even among yourselves, now yourselves is the eldership. Even among the eldership wolves will arise. And that certainly did happen in later history.

I mean look at the bishops in the Roman church. How many of them were wolves instead of shepherds? How many popes were wicked men? If you don't know church history you can't answer that. If you do, you do know that many of the popes were absolute wolves in sheep's clothing.

Many of the bishops in the Roman church were. From the very leadership of the church sometimes the worst wolves who do the most damage to the church come. Now he says these people will draw them in after themselves.

They won't spare the flock. You need to watch out for these people. Jesus writes a letter to the same people, the Ephesians in Revelation chapter 2. And he commends them because they have been testing ministers.

He said you've tested those who say they are apostles and are not and you've found them to be liars. That's good. The church did take Paul's instructions seriously.

They did watch out for wolves. In fact in the early second century Ignatius wrote a letter to the Ephesians also. And he commended them then because they were still on the lookout for false teachers.

So Paul's word stuck with them. Unfortunately though Jesus said they left their first love. And when he wrote Revelation they were guarding against false teaching.

But their love grew kind of cold during this period of time. So Jesus said they have to get back to that. Don't stop being discerning.

But don't stop being loving either. Sometimes it's hard to balance being discerning and judging false doctrine and false wolves on the one hand. And also not losing your love.

You know being loving and zealous for truth. It's a hard balancing act sometimes. Verse 32.

And now brethren I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. Which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified. God's word can build you up and give you an inheritance.

I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes you yourselves know that these hands of mine have provided for my necessities and for those who are with me. Paul did not take a salary.

Paul did not charge for his ministry. He worked. He not only supported himself but his team.

I provided my needs and I provided the needs of those who travel with me. He worked full time in ministry and full time in tent making. So that as a single man he could work both shifts.

A married man would have to spend some time with a family. But a man with no family he could work both shifts. And he did.

He'd work full time supporting himself and his team. He'd also spend probably an equivalent or greater number of hours a day in preaching. I don't covet other people's things.

I've provided for myself. I've shown you in every way by laboring like this that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he said it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Now we have no recorded time when Jesus said that in the Gospels. Which means that Jesus said a lot of things that aren't recorded in the Gospels. And many of them were known.

It's just that the Gospel writers didn't record everything he said. But in the early church many of the saints of Jesus were known to the Christians. And they just never got written down.

But this is one case where Jesus said something and Paul and his readers knew about it. And his hearers knew about it. But we wouldn't know about it if we didn't read his sermon.

Jesus did say it's more blessed to give than to receive. Blessed means happy. And so he ends his sermon that way.

And when he had said these things he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him. Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke that they would see his face no more.

And they accompanied him to the ship. And so he leaves Miletus after having given this strong exhortation to the leaders of the church in Ephesus. And of course because this is the only address we have from Paul to a Christian audience.

It has the more value in that it summarizes especially about Christian leadership. The things that they need to be on the lookout for and need to be doing. Alright we'll stop there.