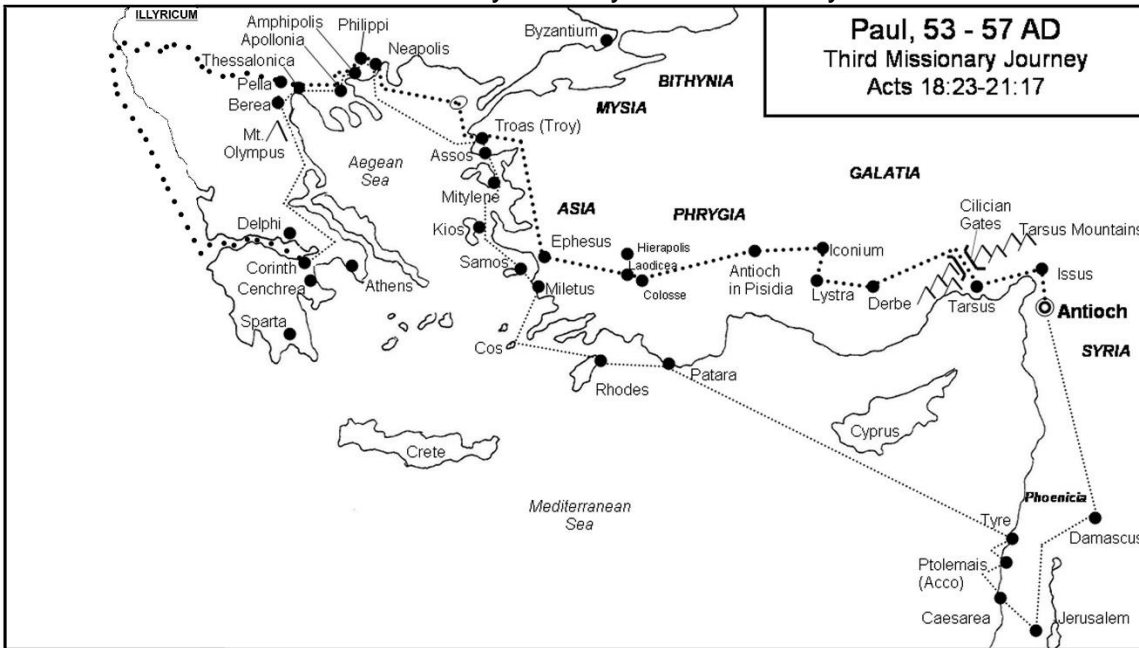


Acts 20

55 AD – Paul in Ephesus; Paul writes **1 Corinthians**. In 1 Cor. 16:8 Paul tells the Corinthians that he planned to stay in Ephesus through Pentecost which would have been May 25 in 55 AD.

56 AD – Riot in Ephesus; Paul Goes to Macedonia; Paul writes **2 Corinthians** (Acts 19:23-20:21)

Acts 20:1-6 are an abbreviated summary of two years of ministry 55-57 AD



Alternate route that goes up into Illyricum (a province in the NW part of the Balkan peninsula along the Adriatic Sea) after going through Macedonia (Acts 20:2) before arriving in Greece (or, Corinth) for 3 months (Acts 20:3).

Acts 20:1 – When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

Paul leaves Ephesus after 3 years of ministry, goes through Troas (2 Cor. 2:12-13).

While Paul is in Macedonia he may have taken time to go



into Illyricum (Romans 15:19) at this time along the Egnatian Way and possibly reaching the Adriatic Sea. Paul may have traveled from Macedonia over into Illyricum before going into Greece to visit Corinth. This would be in line with what he

wrote the Romans (15:19) from Corinth:

*“By the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to **Illyricum**, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.”*

- Romans 15:19

Acts 20:2 – He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece,

Paul stays in Corinth for 3 months.

57 AD – Paul is in Corinth for 3 months. Paul writes **Romans**. Spring of 57 AD Paul leaves Corinth.

Acts 20:3 – where he stayed three months. Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

- Jews plan to kill Paul on the ship (and, possibly steal the large sum of money Paul intended to use to support the Jewish believers in Jerusalem) when he sails from Corinth/Cenchrea for Jerusalem.
- Paul originally wanted to sail back to his home church in Antioch, Syria, but altered his plans due to the Jewish plot to kill him.
- Paul has trouble with:
 1. The Gentiles rioting in Ephesus and wanting to bring legal charges calling for Paul’s execution
 2. The false Christians in Corinth who want to discredit Paul and destroy him.
 3. The Jews in Greece wanting to assassinate him (Acts 20:3)

Acts 20:4 – 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.

- Paul leaves Corinth on land going back through Macedonia. Paul is on his way to Jerusalem with the collection of money from the Gentile believers for the financially poor Jewish believers.
- Representatives from the churches where gathering with Paul for the journey which might give more insight into his closing lines in Romans 16:16, “all the churches of Christ” greet you.
- Paul was accompanied by:
 - Sopater of Berea (same as Romans 16:21)
 - Aristarchus of Thessalonica in Macedonia, Acts 19:29, and was seized in the Ephesus riot.
 - In Acts 27:2 Aristarchus is with Paul when he boards the prison ship headed for Rome.
 - He is with Paul in Roman apartment/arrest, Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 1:24.
 - Secundus of Thessalonica
 - Gaius from Derbe
 - Timothy (may have also served as a representative of Macedonia since he worked there)
 - Tychicus from Asia.
 - Assisted Paul while he was in Rome under house arrest.
 - Colossians 4:7 (and, Eph. 6:21) indicates he carried the letters back to the Colossians and the Ephesians.
 - He may be sent to replace Titus in Titus 3:12
 - Still faithful in 2 Timothy 4:12 when Paul sent him back to Ephesus.
 - Trophimus from Asia.

- Recognized as being from Ephesus in Acts 21:29 when Paul is mistakenly accused of taking him into the temple precincts only open to Jews. It is because of this accusation Paul is arrested and held in prison for five years.
- Still working with Paul in 2 Tim.4:20, but was left behind in Miletus because he was sick.
- Luke may have represented Philippi's offering?
- Paul may have represented Corinth's offering?

Acts 20:5 – These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

- Luke has rejoined Paul in Macedonia. This is the first use of the word “us” (Luke is writing.) since Acts 16:17 when Luke stayed behind in Philippi. Luke (“the brother”) may have went with Titus ahead of Paul to Corinth in 2 Corinthians 8:18? And, then return to the Macedonian churches with Paul at this time or after Paul's arrival in Corinth? Luke rejoins Paul at this point in his writing.
- Paul and Luke (note the use of “us” in this verse) stayed in Philippi while the delegation sailed ahead to Troas.

Timeline:

- 5 days sailing from Philippi (sea port: Neapolis) to Troas after Easter/Unleavened Bread
- 7 days in Troas
- 4 days to Miletus

Acts 20:6 – But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Paul and Luke are in Philippi for the Feast of Unleavened Bread which would also be the day to celebrate Easter.

It is spring of 57 AD in April.

Acts 20:7 – 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.

A week after Easter Paul on “the first day of the week” which would be Sunday (as in 1 Cor. 16:12).

Slaves and workers may not have been able to meet until the evening of Sunday since it was a work day.

Acts 20:8 – There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.

Upstairs was the third floor. This is likely a typical Roman insula with three floors. There would be apartments on the top third floor with shops on the floor at street level. This was typical for most people who lived in cities. Actually, it is not a “house-church” as much as it is an “apartment-church”. The mention of “many lamps” may be to indicate that because of the burning lamps the room was warm and lacking fresh, oxygen rich air.



Acts 20:9 – 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.

- Luke clearly says the young man was dead. NIV seems to say, “appeared to be dead” as if the young man was merely unconscious. But, Luke is saying “dead”.

Acts 20:10 - Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s alive!”

- Paul takes examples from Peter, and also, the OT prophets Elijah and Elisha who both lay on the person.
- Paul may have prayed as is recorded about Elijah’s prayer, “O Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!”

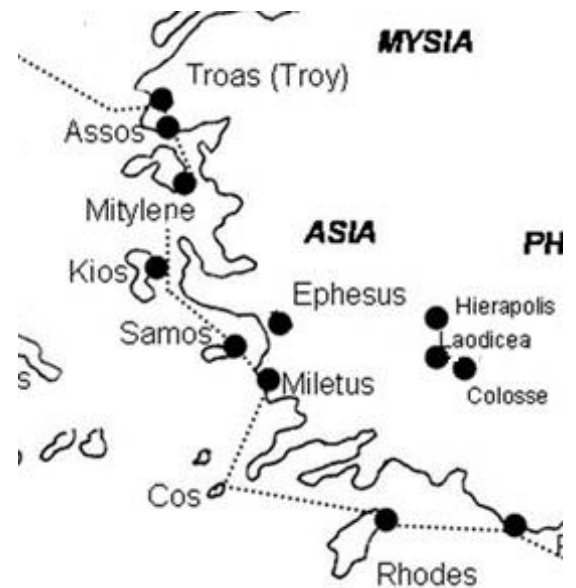
Acts 20:11 - Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.

The breaking of bread most likely was the closing ceremony of celebrating the Lord’s Supper, but it would also have included a full meal.

Acts 20:12 - The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Acts 20:13 - 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.

- The next day the delegation of eight men (the 7 men plus Luke) boarded a ship to sail around to Assos.
- Paul did not take the ship, but stayed a little longer. He knew he could take a short cut across land the 20 miles from Troas to Assos where the delegation’s ship would land at the harbor of Assos.
- Paul may have wanted to spend more time in Troas, OR Paul may have let the ship go as a decoy to check for Jewish assassins.
- Aristotle once lived in Assos.



Acts 20:14 - When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene.

- Mitylene is about 30 miles south of Assos (10 miles off the coast).
- They spent the night in Mitylene

Acts 20:15 - The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.

- The word used in the Greek used in this verse is “antikrys” which means “right through”. This may indicate they sailed right past Chios (Kios) going “right through” the narrow five mile area between Chios and the mainland.
- They would have sailed through the night past Kios and arrived at Samos the next day.
- Paul is bypassing Ephesus and the boat sails 20 miles from Samos to dock at Miletus the following day.
- Miletus is 30 miles due south of Ephesus.
- Miletus is on a small peninsula and actually has 3 separate harbors.
- Interesting note: Josephus records a strong Jewish presence in the city of Miletus. And, archaeology have uncovered an inscription on the fifth row of the city theater that reads, “the place of the Jews and the God-fearers (“theosebion).” This inscription seems to suggest that those who held to the Jewish faith were not only accepted, but held in esteem in Miletus since they were provided a special section of prime seats in the city theater.

Acts 20:16 – 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.

- In 57 AD Pentecost would have been on May 29.
- The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost would have occurred 27 years earlier in 30 AD.

Acts 20:17 - From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

- Since the ship Paul and the delegates were using to reach Jerusalem would be docked at Miletus for 2-3 days to load/unload, a message (messenger) was sent to Ephesus to ask the leaders of the church to meet with Paul in Miletus
- “Elders” are described as being guardians of the church. The Greek word is *epistamai*, often translated “bishop”. The role here is to guard and protect the church. This is not an official office as it is today known as “bishop”

Paul’s Speech to the Ephesian Leaders

- First section: Acts 20:18-27, Paul reviews his time with the Ephesians
- Second section: Acts 20:28-35, Paul looks to the future of the church when Paul will no longer be with them.

Two verses at the end of Romans capture Paul’s situation including his attitude and his plans:

- The danger and the unknown fate of this trip to Jerusalem: Romans 15:30-32
- Paul’s ministry in the Aegean world (eastern Mediterranean area) was complete. Paul would now be ministering in the west in places such as Rome and Spain: Romans 15:17-24

Acts 20:18 – “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.

- Luke records this message and its high points. But, of all the messages recorded SO FAR by Luke in the book of Acts, this is the only one that Luke has actually been present for. The messages that follow in the book of Acts will have a good chance for Luke to be present and taking notes.
- This the only recorded speech of Paul’s that he addresses a group of believers. They are not mixed with Gentiles he is trying to convert or Jews he is trying to convince. This is specifically a group of Christian leaders.
- They are warned of deviations from within and by members of the group that is standing with them.
- Since the assassination plot by the Jews was revealed in Corinth Paul seems to be pessimistic about his future after this trip to Jerusalem. That combined with Paul’s history of trouble with the Gentile unbelievers and trouble within the churches he starts.
- Luke writes

Acts 20:19 – “I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents.

- Paul ministry is described as:
 - Humility – Paul did not claim anything as his own. This matches his writings in:
 - 2 Cor. 10:1
 - 2 Cor. 11:7
 - 1 Thes. 2:6
 - Tears – Paul’s personal concern and involvement. As in these verses written by Paul:
 - Romans 9:2
 - 2 Cor. 2:4
 - Phil. 3:18
 - Patient Persistence – Paul continued his work and did not let discouragement or persecution stop him. As here:
 - 2 Cor. 11:24 and 26
 - 1 Thes. 2:14-16

Acts 20:20 – “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.

- Publicly –
 - Jewish synagogue
 - Tyrannus’ lecture-hall
- House to House
 - Romans 16:5
 - Col. 4:15
 - Philemon 2
- This verse begins to reveal that there is some developing criticism of Paul and some accusations being formed against Paul. This is similar to what had been happening in Corinth while Paul was in Ephesus.

Acts 20:21 – “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

- Greeks (Gentiles) called to turn to God in repentance
- Jews called to accept Jesus as their Promised Messiah

The assumption here is that both Gentiles and Jews would be responding in faith.

The Gentiles needed to repent of their pagan ways, and the Jews needed to repent of their rejection of Jesus.

The Jews would typically be following the ways of the Law of Moses

Acts 20:22 - “And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

- “compelled” indicates “guided”
- Seems to be guided by the Holy Spirit to Jerusalem at this time, but yet the results of this trip have not been revealed to Paul.
- Paul is well aware of the impending dangers and his own uncertainty with this trip to Jerusalem.
 - Romans 15:30-32 Paul asks for prayer for:
 - deliverance from the dangers of this trip
 - the acceptance of the financial offering he is taking
- The revelation of the Spirit to Paul would have come through local prophets (or, personal revelation.)

Acts 20:23 – “I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

- It seems that Paul is clear that when he gets to Jerusalem there will be persecution and imprisonment.

Acts 20:24 – “However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

- Paul reveals this same attitude in 2 Cor. 4:7-5:10
 - 2 Cor. 6:4-10
 - 2 Cor 12:9 and following
 - Philippians 1:19-26; 2:17; 3:8
 - Col. 1:24
- What Paul does not know is if he will be killed at this time.
- What does matter to Paul is that he finishes his course; as in 2 Timothy 4:7

Acts 20:25 - “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

- Paul knows his ministry is finished in Asia and he is moving to minister in the West (Rome and Spain) if his life is spared (Romans 15:23)

Acts 20:26 - “Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you.

- Paul has completed successfully his work in Asia
- Like Ezekiel Paul is innocent if the church fails: Ezekiel 18:13 and Ezekiel 33:1-6

Acts 20:27 – “For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

- Paul has proclaimed the whole plan of God and not just the favorable parts or the parts that would get Paul public acceptance.

Part Two of the Farewell Speech: What will happen after Paul is gone -

Acts 20:28 - “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood

- Guardians is *episkopoi* which means “overseers” and has been translated bishops. This is referring to the elders Paul is talking to
- These are the shepherds who are to feed the flock as in Ezek. 34:12-16 and 1 Peter 5:1-4
- The people are considered the flock and the leaders are the pastors.
- The leaders are then responsible for feeding and guarding the flock.
- The danger is false teachers and false leaders who want to use the sheep for their own advantage.
- John 21:15-17
- 1 Peter 5:2

Acts 20:29 - “I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

- Instead of “guardians” or “shepherds” or “pastors” the Ephesian church will have to face savage wolves who will be accepted as guardians, shepherds and pastors.
- Wolves are the heretical teachers as in Matthew 7:15
- This manifests in Paul’s correction to Timothy in 1 Timothy 1:3-7 and John’s letter in Rev. 2:2-5
- Also, John 10:12
- This attack will be from outside the church and will come into the church

Acts 20:30 - “Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

- Besides an outside-to-inside attack, the Ephesian church will face attack from within the church itself.
- Perverse teaching that will seduce the flock will come from the Ephesian leadership
- This is seen in:
 - 1 Timothy 1:3
 - 2 Tim. 1:15
 - Rev. 2:1-7

Acts 20:31 - "So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

- The Ephesian leaders are to be watchful for these attacks.

Acts 20:32 - "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.

- Paul left them under the care of:
 - God
 - God's word
 - The message of grace.
 - This could be translated "gracious word" as in Luke 4:22 if God's word is characterized by his grace.
 - But, if the subject matter of the word is grace then the translation would be "the word of his grace."
 - The same Greek phrase is used in Acts 14:3 – "confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders."
 - In Acts 20:24 Paul has just used a similar phrase – "the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace."
 - The recorded, inspired truth
- Note two phases of ministry:
 - Sanctification (Salvation)
 - The word of grace can save them
 - Inheritance (Maturity and Reward)
 - Continuing in the word will lead to growth, productivity and an eternal inheritance.
 - 1 Corinthians 3:9-15
 - Ephesians 4:12

Acts 20:33 - "I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

- Clothing was considered part of a man's wealth
- The standard Paul set was to provide service without having an eye on the people's wealth.
- Samuel does a similar thing in 1 Samuel 12:3 – "*Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these things, I will make it right.*"
- 1 Peter 5:2-3 - "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."
- Paul was setting a standard he expect his ministry team and the Ephesian leaders to follow.

Acts 20:34 - "You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

- 1 Corinthians 4:12 – "We work hard with our own hands."
- 1 Thes. 2:9 – "Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you."
- 1 Thes. 4:11 & 5:11 – "...and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You should mind your own business and work with your hands, just as we told you..." "warn those who are idle."
- 2 Thes. 3:7-12 – "For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with toil and labor we worked night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you. It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living."

- Acts 19 (19:9) – While Paul was in Ephesus he worked with his hands according to Acts 20:34.

Acts 20:35 – “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.’

- Provide for their own selves
- Provide for those who could not work.
 - Ephesians 4:28 – “Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.”
- Paul did receive financial assistance from other churches who supported him
 - 2 Corinthians 11:7-10
 - Philippians 4:10-19

Acts 20:36 - “When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

- Standing in prayer was typical on a daily basis, but the seriousness and solemnness of this moment led the group to kneel in prayer

Acts 20:37 - “They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.

Acts 20:38 - “What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Follow Up:

- Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (60 AD)
- Paul’s First (62 AD) and Second (67 AD) Letter to Timothy
- Jesus letter through John to the Ephesian church in 96 AD