

Notes on Paul's Third Missionary Journey & Journey to Jerusalem

Acts 20-21

Acts 20:1-6 – Paul in Macedonia and Greece

From Ephesus, Paul goes to Macedonia (i.e. Philippi, Thessalonica, etc.) and Greece (Corinth)

After spending 3 months in Greece, a plot against Paul by the Jews arose just as Paul was getting ready to go to Syria (through Macedonia)

A number of people from various churches Paul has visited follow with him. Why?

The companions go to Troas, while Paul goes to Philippi (celebrates Passover) and then meets up with them in Troas

Acts 20:7-16 – Eutychus

Paul means only to stop for the night, but continues talking long into the night

A young man, named Eutychus falls asleep and falls out a third story window

Paul assures them the youth is not dead (Luke could easily verify otherwise), and after breaking bread together Paul leaves in the morning with Eutychus alive (cf. with 1 Kgs. 17:19ff. and 2 Kgs. 4:32-33)

Paul's company sent ahead by sea, while Paul goes by land to Assos and then they all sail to Mytilene to Samos to Miletus

Paul aims to avoid Ephesus so he can make it to Jerusalem for Pentecost

Acts 20:17-38 – Paul's farewell to the Ephesian elders (pastors)

However, he summons the elders from Ephesus to meet him at Ephesus so he can encourage them

Paul recounts the hardships of his ministry in Asia to both Jews and Greeks

Paul tells them he's going on to Jerusalem where the Holy Spirit has assured him that imprisonment and afflictions await him

Paul tells the Ephesian elders that they will not see him again, and so he instructs them to take care of the flock because wolves will follow and attack to draw the disciples away from the truth faith in Jesus

Paul commends them to God and His word of grace

How do Paul's warnings match up with what we know about the church in Ephesus? (cf. Paul's letters to Timothy and Rev. 2:1ff.)

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The Journey to Jerusalem

In what follows, Paul's life (and the composition of the Book of Acts) very closely resembles Jesus' own life (and the shape of the Gospel of Luke). After a time of ministry of the proclamation of God's Kingdom and the Gospel that was sometimes accompanied by opposition, a turning point is reached when Paul/Jesus make the determination that they must go to Jerusalem to undergo persecution and suffering (cf. Acts 20:22ff. and Luke 9:51 (in the context of Luke 9:21-22, 44; 18:31-33)). Jesus enters Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, while Paul comes to celebrate Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Just as Jesus' disciples tried to turn Him aside from this grim fate, so also do many people in Paul's life (e.g. Acts 21:4, 10-14). Once in Jerusalem, both Paul and Jesus were arrested and falsely accused of crimes they did not commit. Both were to trial both before Jewish, but then also before Roman leaders. Although both were innocent, they endured much suffering along the way. Paul's own experiences obviously do not match the death and resurrection of Jesus, but through Paul's sufferings, the Gospel is proclaimed to the ends of the earth, bringing to fruition Jesus' own commands to His apostles (Acts 1:8). Paul's final coming to Jerusalem is marked by his conversation with James about Paul's own ministry to the Gentiles and his bringing the love-offering from the Gentile churches in Macedonia (Romans 15:30-31). Paul's act of coming to Jerusalem is a bold statement of the unity of the church through faith in Jesus to create a new humanity. In other words, through Paul's actions, we are meant to see the unity of the church, a unity that first begins at the cross of Jesus our King.

Acts 21:1-6 – From Mytilene to Tyre

Acts 21:7-16 – From Tyre to Caesarea

Acts 21:15-16 – From Caesarea to Jerusalem

Acts 21:17-25 – Paul's Conversation with James in Jerusalem