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Acts 20

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Acts 20.

Topics.

- Paul holds an all-night Bible study in an upper room.
- Eutychus overcome by sleep falls three floors.
- Paul gives a farewell speech to the elders of the Ephesian churches.
- Paul prays with the elders of Ephesus.
- God obtained the church with His own blood.

The previous chapter: Paul teaches for two years in the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus and then determines to go to Jerusalem and Rome. Demetrius a silversmith was losing money because of Paul's teaching that gods made with hands are nothing which meant many people had stopped buying his silver shines of Artemis who all Asia worshiped so he and other craftsmen cause a riot in the theatre of the city of Ephesus, eventually the town clerk brings calm it and everyone leaves. The chapter ended with Paul still waiting for in Ephesus for and Timothy and Erastus to arrive.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ACTS 20:1-6

Paul departs to Macedonia.

- **Acts 20:1-6:** After the uproar ceased Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. ²When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece ³There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus from Berea, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, ⁶but we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

The words, "After the uproar" (v1) refer to the riot in the city of Ephesus over the goddess Diana at the end of the previous chapter. Paul says farewell to the disciples in Ephesus and then travels through Macedonia encouraging brothers and sisters throughout the region until he arrives in Greece. After three months in Greece Jews plot against Paul so he decides to return to Macedonia, Sopater of Berea accompanied Paul to Macedonia (and of course Luke) while, Aristarchus, Secundus and Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus went ahead of them and waited at Troas for Paul and Sopater to arrive.

Sopater: a Christian, his name means a safe father it carries the idea of saving, delivering, protecting, healing and preserving.

Aristarchus: a Macedonian Christian his name means, best ruling.

Secundus: a Christian his name means second."

Gaius: a Christian.

Timothy: a Christian his name means, dear to God."

Tychicus: a Christian his name means, fortunate, it carries the idea of being happy, favoured prosperous, successful with the idea of making a thing ready or bringing to pass.

Trophimus: a Christian his name means, nutritive it carries the idea of nourishment.

ACTS 20:7-12

Paul holds an all-Night Bible Study in an Upper Room.

- **Acts 20:7-12:** On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. ⁸There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. ¹⁰But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms (embracing him KJV), said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." ¹¹And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. ¹²And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

Gathered together in the upper room with Paul was Luke, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus and Trophimus (v4) plus many others attending the all-night Bible study group.

Eutychus overcome by sleep falls three floors: brothers and sisters are gathered together on Sunday (the first day of the week) (v7) in an upper room. Since they had no electricity they would normally be up at daylight and go to bed once it was dark, but brothers and sisters knew Paul would be speaking so they brought many lamps to allow the meeting to go longer than normal which it did. Eutychus a young boy or teenager overcome by sleep, fell three floors and when the brothers and sisters got to him he was dead, Paul takes him in his arms and tells the people he is alive naturally those at the meeting were so enormously comforted they return to the meeting, break bread together and the meeting continues until sunrise.

Taken up: (airo) means, to lift or raise some speculate on whether Eutychus was dead or simply considered dead, but with the miraculous healing power that was flowing through Paul at this time the best idea is to take the verse at face value which states "Eutychus was taken up dead (v9)."

Breaking bread: breaking Bread in the early church meant, "Having a Meal," but when used in the context of Christ it carries the idea of sharing a meal in the Lord's presence and the conversation revolving around Christ and being full of the fruits of the Spirit and righteousness contrasted to the secular world sharing a meal where the conversation is fleshy, worldly and the Lord is totally devoid of it.

ACTS 20:13-24

Paul gives a Farewell Speech to the Elders of the Ephesian Churches.

- **Acts 20:13-24:** But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. ¹⁴And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. ¹⁵And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. ¹⁶For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he

might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. ¹⁷Now from Miletus he (Paul) sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. ¹⁸And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹servicing the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²²And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul desiring to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost leaves Troas (v6) and with the brothers sets sail toward Jerusalem. On the way Paul stops at Miltus and gives a farewell speech to the elders of the Ephesian churches.

Paul tells the elders he served the Lord:

- With humility, tears and trials because of the plots of the Jews.
- Did not shrink from declaring anything that was profitable.
- Teaching in public and from house to house.
- Proclaiming to both Jews and Gentiles that salvation comes through repentance toward God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here we see Paul's fantastic faith and commitment to serving the Lord, even though he is fully aware when he arrives in Jerusalem, he will suffer afflictions, beatings, difficulties, burdens, hardships, pains, troubles, miseries and imprisonment he does not hesitate for a moment from going. One of the key reasons Paul does not shy away from persecution is because he does not count his life of any value, worth or importance to himself, the only value he puts on his life is serving the Lord and proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel of the grace of God (v24) thus one of the reasons Christ called him to be his ambassador to take the word of the Lord to Jews and Gentiles alike.

NOTE: those who desire to serve the Lord can learn two good lessons from Paul's words:

1. Just because someone is doing a good work for the Lord does not always mean it is going to be a smooth and easy path.
2. When it is difficult it does not mean the Lord has forsaken those that are humbly serving him, but rather that he is preparing a royal and eternal crown for them.

Was Paul led by his spirit or the Holy Spirit?

It is interesting to notice in chapter nineteen we are told: -

- Paul resolved in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21)

And then in chapter twenty Paul says:

- He is going to Jerusalem, constrained (bound in the spirit) (KJV) by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to him except that the Holy Spirit testifies to him in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await him (Acts 20:22-23).

And in chapter twenty-one Luke states:

- The disciples through the Spirit were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4)

And a few verses further on the prophet Agabus tied Paul's hands and feet with his own belt and told Paul through the Holy Spirit:

- This is what the Jews would do to him in Jerusalem.

Upon hearing this all the brothers once again urged Paul not to leave, but he told them that his heart was set on going to Jerusalem even it meant his death so the brothers could not persuade him to stay and then after doing all they could without any success to stop him going they make an amazing statement:

- Let the will of the Lord be done (Acts 21:10-14).

So, was Paul being led by his own spirit or the Holy Spirit? To understand the answer to this it is helpful to know that the word constrained (Acts 20:22) can carry any of the following meanings, controlled, compelled, pressured, made, coerced, restrained or hindered and the word "Bound" (the Greek word *deo*) from Strong's Concordance literally or figuratively means to bind or be in bonds, it carries the idea of something necessary i.e., must be, ought to, should do with the thought in the mind of something needful.

Putting it all together: it appears Paul in his own spirit felt a responsibility to once again attempt to take the Gospel to his Jewish brothers at Jerusalem, we know he had an overwhelming love for them because he says, "I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom 9:3), but through the restraints he felt in his own spirit the Holy Spirit was constraining him from going and through difficulties was hindering him and through the brothers and the prophet Agabus warning him from going. But Paul was determined most likely because of his love for his nation, the Jewish people and those he had spent his life growing up with in Jerusalem. So the statement, "Let the will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:10-14) seems to mean that even if the Lord attempts to warn us from danger what we end up doing for him is still counted as the will of the Lord, but we will suffer the consequences of such a choice.

A typical example: a natural example of this would be when an older and mature Christian man finds himself advising a new convert in the Lord not to take a certain path since being much older they can see the end result of such an action, but being young and zealous the young man is determined that the path he is about to take is the right path so he ignores the older man's warning and does what he determined to do, in this scenario the older man can correctly say, "Let the will of the Lord be done". Even though he knows the path a person is taking will eventually lead to sorrow and hardship. This scenario happens in almost all Christian families there are times when our adult children are determined to take a path we would prefer they didn't sometimes we have to say as the brothers did to Paul "Let the will of the Lord be done" and rest in the fact that silver and gold cannot be produced without fire.

Paul served the Lord with tears: though Paul had God's Spirit and at certain times His miraculous power flowing through him he was not a super human man, emotionally he felt pain and sorrow the same as all humans do, thus the reason he says, "I served the Lord with tears" (v19, 31) no-doubt for his Jewish brothers who he loved, but who rejected his message and for the many others who denied the Good News of the gospel of Christ.

ACTS 20:25-38

Paul's farewell speech continued:

- **Acts 20:25-38:** And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, ²⁷for I did not shrink from declaring to

you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. ³²And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. ³³I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. ³⁵In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ³⁶And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Paul tells the elders of the Ephesian churches:

- This is the last time they will see him.
- Should they fall away he cannot be held guilty since he has told them the whole counsel of God.
- The Holy Spirit has made them overseers of the church so they should pay careful attention not only to themselves, but to all those in the church of God.
- Once Paul leaves, false teachers even from among themselves will arise who do not have any compassion for the flock, but because they love the fame and importance will twist Scriptures to draw disciples to themselves thus, we should not be surprised we have religious teachers do the same today.
- Three years Paul proclaimed to them the Gospel with tears and compassion.
- The word of the Lord and his grace is able to give eternal life.
- Paul never demanded money from anyone, but worked hard to support himself and those who ministered with him (he was a tent maker) to set the example and show that helping the poor is achieved by hard work.

Jesus words, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v35) means two things:

1. Whoever has a giving heart will experience joy in their own lives as they help others.
2. God will reward them at the judgment seat since by giving to others they are storing up treasures in heaven.

Paul prays with the elders of Ephesus: ponder for a moment, the emotion, this is a group of grown strong macho men that is kneeling and praying together in a bond of friendship that has developed over three years of ministry involving violent persecutions and times of weeping and now they are overwhelmed with deep sorrow because Paul is leaving. Without embracement they hug and embrace each other with kisses of friendship and tears of sorrow no-doubt flowing down their faces because they know they will never see Paul again such was the bond of those who had shared in the ministry with Paul. After this enormously emotional moment in the Lord's presence they travel with Paul to the ship that is to take him to Jerusalem (v36-38). This prayer group teaches all leaders serving the Lord that it is not a shameful thing to express deep emotion

when they are overwhelmed by it, Paul was one of the Lords strongest and greatest leaders, but he never felt that he had to keep a stiff upper lip before his followers. One of the keys to his life may have been the fact he was his true authentic self to whoever he was with.

God obtained the church with his own blood: these words are used by some to support the theory that Jesus is God, but this is misreading the verse. God did not die on the cross we know this because the Scriptures state that God is immortal and eternal and therefore cannot die. The very meaning of the word eternal is never-ending which means that God is an eternal Spirit without beginning and without end and cannot be killed or die especially at the hands of human men. Rather the words, "God obtained the church with his own blood" means with his own Son. Christ was born of God and is His only beloved Son it is in this sense that Luke writes God obtained the church with His own blood meaning His own Son we know this because John writes:

- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

For further information see the title:

- Trinity (Doctrine of the Trinity) in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The cost of purchasing the church to God was His Son and the cost to His Son was his life this should give everyone in the global church of the Lord Jesus Christ an idea of how much the Father and the Son love and value them.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.