

Comments About Acts 20

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 20.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Overview of Paul's travels

As we entered into Acts 13, we began reading about Paul's missionary journeys. According to some Bible commentaries, the trips can be categorized in the following manner.

- First missionary journey—Acts 13:1 until Acts 14:28
- Second missionary journey—Acts 15:36 until Acts 18:22
- Third missionary journey—Acts 18:23 until Acts 21:16
- Trip to Rome—Acts 21:17 until Acts 28:31

Visited many cities

Throughout the book of Acts, the travels of various disciples are recorded. Such is true in Acts 20.

- The beginning of Acts 20 mentioned the following places—Macedonia (verse 1), Greece (verse 2), Syria (verse 3) and Macedonia again (verse 3).
- Verse 4 mentioned some of Paul's traveling companions at that time—Sopater of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians; Gaius of Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
- Paul gave a long sermon until midnight that resulted in a young man named Eutychus sinking into a deep sleep and falling to his death (verses 7-9). Yet the man lived (verses 10-11).
- Paul traveled to other cities—including Assos (verse 13), Mitylene (verse 14), Samos (verse 15), Trogyllium (verse 15) and Miletus (verse 15).

Paul's message to elders

From Miletus, Paul sent for the elders in Ephesus (verse 17) and spoke to them in verses 18-35. Notice a few highlights.

Acts 20:18-21—“And when they had come to him, he said to them: ‘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; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ”

Acts 20:28-31—“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 purchased with His own blood. 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 rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Acts 20:32-35—“So 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 all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have 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.’ ”

■ Many of the brethren wept freely, because they concluded that they would not see Paul again (verses 36-38).