

ACTS CHAPTER 20

REVIEW- IN CHAPTER 19:20 WE SAW "THAT THE WORD OF THE LORD WAS GROWING MIGHTILY AND PREVAILING." BUT WHEREVER THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED, IT WILL BE OPPOSED BY PEOPLE WHO MAKE MONEY FROM SUPERSTITION AND SIN. IN THIS CASE IT WAS THE SILVERSMITHS WHO MADE SILVER STATUES OF DIANA . DEMETRIUS MADE USE OF THE TWO THINGS THE EPHESIANS LOVED THE MOST; THE HONOR OF THEIR CITY AND THE GREATNESS OF THEIR GODDESS AND HER TEMPLE. THE CITY CLERK FINALLY GOT MATTERS UNDER CONTROL AND HE DID IT PRIMARILY FOR POLITICAL REASONS. BUT EPHESUS IS GONE, AND SO IS THE WORLDWIDE WORSHIP OF DIANA OF EPHESUS. THE CITY AND THE TEMPLE ARE GONE, AND THE SILVERSMITHS' GUILD IS GONE. YET THE GOSPEL OF GOD'S GRACE AND THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST ARE STILL HERE! THIS IS WHERE CHAPTER 20 BEGINS-

THIS CHAPTER DESCRIBES THREE "FAREWELL EVENTS" AS PAUL CLOSED HIS MINISTRY IN MACEDONIA, ACHAIA AND ASIA.

1. A FAREWELL JOURNEY

PAUL WAS READY FOR ONE MORE JOURNEY. HE WANTED TO MAKE ONE MORE VISIT TO THE CHURCHES THE LORD HAD HELPED HIM FOUND.

VS 1 WHAT DOES PAUL DO? WHAT IMPORTANT FACT DO WE LEARN ABOUT PAUL? HE WAS AN _____. HOW CAN WE BE ENCOURAGERS?

VS 2 IN THIS VERSE WE SEE THAT PAUL GAVE THEM _____ ENCOURAGEMENT. PAUL HAD TWO GOALS IN MIND WHEN HE VISITED THE VARIOUS CHURCHES. HIS MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO ENCOURAGE AND STRENGTHEN THE SAINTS SO THEY MIGHT STAND TRUE TO THE LORD AND BE EFFECTIVE WITNESSES. HIS SECOND PURPOSE WAS TO FINISH TAKING UP THE COLLECTION FOR THE NEEDY BELIEVERS IN JERUSALEM.

VS 3 TELLS US ABOUT A _____. WHEN PAUL WAS ABOUT TO SET SAIL FROM GREECE TO SYRIA A JEWISH PLOT WAS UNMASKED AND HE CHANGED HIS ROUTE TO AN OVERLAND WAY. THE FIRST PLOT AGAINST PAUL IS 9:24.

VS 4 THESE MEN WHO ACCOMPANIED PAUL WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHURCHES, APPOINTED TO TRAVEL WITH PAUL AND HELP HANDLE THE FUNDS.

VS 5 WHAT HAD THESE MEN DONE? WE HAVE ANOTHER "WE" SECTION THAT SHOWS US LUKE HAS JOINED PAUL. THEY STAYED IN TROAS FOR A WEEK. MAYBE THEY WERE WAITING FOR THE DEPARTURE OF THE NEXT SHIP.

VS 6 PAUL WAS NOT ABLE TO MAKE IT TO JERUSALEM FOR THE ANNUAL PASSOVER CELEBRATION. THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD BEGAN WITH THE DAY OF THE PASSOVER AND LASTED ONE WEEK, DURING WHICH THE JEWS ATE UNLEAVENED BREAD IN MEMORY OF THEIR DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT. THE TIME OF PASSOVER WAS THE

MIDDLE OF APRIL. SO NOW HIS GOAL IS TO ARRIVE AT LEAST BY PENTECOST(FEAST OF HARVEST). THE EARLY CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS, WHO WERE GATHERED IN JERUSALEM FOR OBSERVANCE OF THIS FEAST, EXPERIENCED THE OUTPOURING OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT IN A MIRACULOUS WAY (ACTS 2:1-4).

VS 7 SO HOW DID THE YOUNG CHURCH MET AND WORSHIP THE LORD? THIS IS OUR FIRST ACCOUNT OF WHAT A SERVICE WAS LIKE IN THE EARLY CHURCH. LET'S CONSIDER HOW THE EARLY CHURCH MET AND WORSHIPPED THE LORD.

THE LORD'S DAY- THEY MET ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK AND NOT ON THE SEVENTH DAY, WHICH WAS THE SABBATH. THE FIRST DAY CAME TO BE CALLED "THE LORD'S DAY" BECAUSE ON IT OUR LORD AROSE FROM THE DEAD. DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CHURCH, THE BELIEVERS DID MAINTAIN SOME OF THE JEWISH TRADITIONS SUCH AS THE HOURS OF PRAYER (ACTS 3:1). BUT AS TIME WENT ON, THEY MOVED AWAY FROM THE MOSAIC CALENDAR AND DEVELOPED THEIR OWN PATTERN OF WORSHIP AS THE SPIRIT TAUGHT THEM.

THE LORD'S PEOPLE- THE CHURCH MET IN THE EVENING BECAUSE SUNDAY WAS NOT A HOLIDAY DURING WHICH PEOPLE WERE FREE FROM DAILY EMPLOYMENT. THE BELIEVERS MET IN AN UPPER ROOM BECAUSE THEY HAD NO CHURCH BUILDINGS IN WHICH TO GATHER. THIS ROOM MAY HAVE BEEN IN A PRIVATE HOME OF ONE OF THE BELIEVERS. THE GROUP WOULD HAVE BEEN A COSMOPOLITAN GROUP BUT THEIR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL DISTINCTIONS MADE NO DIFFERENCE-THEY WERE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS (GAL 3:28).

THE LORD'S SUPPER- THE EARLY CHURCH SHARED A "POTLUCK" MEAL THEY CALLED THE "LOVE FEAST", AFTER WHICH THEY WOULD OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER. BY SHARING AND EATING WITH ONE ANOTHER, THE CHURCH ENJOYED FELLOWSHIP AND GAVE WITNESS OF THEIR ONENESS IN CHRIST. SLAVES WOULD ACTUALLY EAT AT THE SAME TABLE WITH THEIR MASTERS, SOMETHING UNHEARD OF IN THAT DAY. IT IS LIKELY THAT THE CHURCH OBSERVED THE LORD'S SUPPER EACH LORD'S DAY WHEN THEY MET FOR FELLOWSHIP AND WORSHIP. IN FACT, SOME BELIEVERS PROBABLY ENDED THEIR REGULAR MEALS AT HOME BY TAKING THE BREAD AND WINE AND REMEMBERING THE LORD'S DEATH.

THE LORD'S MESSAGE- THE WORD OF GOD WAS ALWAYS DECLARED IN THE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES AND INCLUDED THE PUBLIC READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES. THEY ALSO READ ANY APOSTOLIC LETTERS THAT HAD BEEN RECEIVED. KNOWING THIS WOULD PROBABLY BE HIS LAST MEETING WITH THE SAINTS AT TROAS, PAUL PREACHED A LONG SERMON, AFTER WHICH HE ATE AND CONVERSED WITH THE PEOPLE UNTIL MORNING. THE WORD OF GOD IS IMPORTANT TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, AND THE PREACHING AND TEACHING OF THE WORD MUST BE EMPHASIZED.

THE LORD'S POWER-

VS 8 GIVES US SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION. WHAT DOES IT TELL US.

VS 9 WHETHER IT WAS THE LATENESS OF THE HOUR OR THE STUFFINESS OF THE ROOM, EUTYCHUS (FORTUNATE) FELL ASLEEP AND FELL OUT THE WINDOW AND WAS KILLED BY THE FALL. DR. HOWARD MARSHALL, AN EMINENT GREEK SCHOLAR, SAYS HE WAS A "YOUNG LAD OF EIGHT TO FOURTEEN YEARS. HE MAY HAVE BEEN A YOUNG MAN WHO WAS ALSO A SERVANT. HE MAY HAVE WORKED HARD THAT DAY AND WAS WEARY. HE SAT NEAR VENTILATION AND HE MUST HAVE TRIED TO FIGHT OFF SLEEP THAT FINALLY OVERCAME HIM. THE TENSE OF THE GREEK VERB INDICATES THAT HE WAS GRADUALLY OVERCOME.

VS 10 WHAT DOES THE LORD ALLOW PAUL TO DO?

VS 11 HOW DID PAUL REACT TO THE SITUATION THAT HAD JUST HAPPENED?

VS 12 HOW DID THE PEOPLE REACT TO THE SITUATION THAT HAD JUST HAPPENED?

2. A FAREWELL MESSAGE-

VS 13 PAUL CHOSE TO WALK FROM TROAS TO ASSOS, A DISTANCE OF ABOUT TWENTY MILES. MAYBE HE WANTED TIME ALONE WITH THE LORD ABOUT HIS TRIP TO JERUSALEM. PAUL MUST HAVE SENSED ALREADY THAT DIFFICULT DAYS LAY AHEAD OF HIM. IT WOULD TAKE A SHIP AT LEAST A DAY TO SAIL FROM TROAS TO ASSOS AND PAUL COULD PROBABLY WALK IT IN TEN HOURS OR LESS.

VS 14-16 BECAUSE LUKE WAS WITH PAUL WE CAN FOLLOW PAUL THIS TIME ALMOST DAY BY DAY AND STAGE BY STAGE. WE HAVE SEEN HOW PAUL WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE BEEN IN JERUSALEM FOR THE PASSOVER AND HOW THE PLOT OF THE JEWS HINDERED THAT. THOUGH PAUL HAD BROKEN AWAY FROM THE JEWS THE ANCESTRAL FEASTS WERE STILL DEAR TO HIM. PAUL WAS THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES. HIS OWN PEOPLE MIGHT HATE HIM BUT IN HIS HEART THERE WAS NOTHING BUT LOVE AND YEARNING FOR THEM.

VS 17 PAUL SUMMONS THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS. THERE WERE THREE PARTS TO PAUL'S FAREWELL MESSAGE:

1. VS 18-21 FIRST HE REVIEWED THE PAST:

PAUL'S MANNER- VS 18-19 WHAT DID HIS MANNER OF SERVICE LOOK LIKE? HIS MINISTRY WAS EXEMPLARY. HE LIVED A CONSISTENT LIFE THAT ANYBODY COULD INSPECT. HE SERVED WITH HUMILITY. DOES THIS MEAN PAUL WAS WEAK? HE WAS NOT ASHAMED TO ADMIT TO HIS FRIENDS THERE HAD BEEN TIMES OF TEARS? WHAT DOES THIS STATEMENT SHOW US ABOUT PAUL'S MINISTRY?

PAUL'S MOTIVE- VS 19 WHAT DROVE PAUL IN HIS MINISTRY? _____ HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN MAKING MONEY OR ENJOYING AN EASY LIFE, FOR HE WAS THE BONDSERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST.

PAUL'S MESSAGE- VS 20-21 THE MESSAGE OF HIS MINISTRY WAS WELL KNOWN BECAUSE HE ANNOUNCED IT AND TAUGHT IT PUBLICLY AS WELL AS IN THE VARIOUS HOUSE CHURCHES. HE TOLD SINNERS TO REPENT OF THEIR SINS AND BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST. THIS MESSAGE WAS "THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD" AND IT IS THE ONLY MESSAGE THAT CAN SAVE THE SINNER. HIS WAS A BALANCED MESSAGE THAT INCLUDED THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES, AS WELL AS THE PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT BELONG TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. WHAT ARE SOME OF OUR PRIVILEGES AS BELIEVERS? WHAT ARE SOME OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

PAUL'S MOTIVATION- VS 22-26 THE PHRASE "AND NOW" SHIFTS THE EMPHASIS FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT. WHO WAS LEADING PAUL? _____

VS 22 WAS PAUL AFRAID OF WHAT THE FUTURE HELD?

VS 23 DID PAUL FOLLOW NO MATTER THE FUTURE? WHAT DO THESE EXAMPLES IN PAUL'S LIFE SAY TO US TODAY? IN HIS TESTIMONY, PAUL USED SIX GRAPHIC PICTURES OF HIS MINISTRY TO EXPLAIN WHY HE WOULD NOT QUIT BUT WOULD GO TO JERUSALEM TO DIE FOR JESUS CHRIST IF NECESSARY. LET'S SEE HOW WE CAN APPLY PAUL'S WALK TO OUR LIVES.

1. VS 24 AN ACCOUNTANT- HE EXAMINED HIS ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AND DECIDED TO PUT JESUS CHRIST AHEAD OF EVERYTHING ELSE.

2. VS 24 A RUNNER- PAUL SEES HIMSELF AS A RUNNER WHO WANTED TO FINISH HIS COURSE IN JOYFUL VICTORY.

3. VS 24 A STEWARD- WHAT DID PAUL CONSIDER HIMSELF A STEWARD OF? WHO GAVE HIM HIS MINISTRY? THE STEWARD OWNS LITTLE OR NOTHING, BUT HE POSSESSES ALL THINGS. REMEMBER THE STEWARD MUST ONE DAY GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF HIS MINISTRY. PAUL WAS READY FOR THAT DAY. ARE YOU?

4. VS 24 A WITNESS- WHAT COULD PAUL TESTIFY TO?

5. VS 25 A HERALD- THE WORD PREACHING MEANS "TO DECLARE A MESSAGE AS THE HERALD OF THE KING". DO YOU THINK PAUL FIT THIS DESCRIPTION?

6. VS 26-27 A WATCHMAN- WHAT A SERIOUS CALLING IT WAS TO BE A WATCHMAN! HE HAD TO BE FAITHFUL, NOT FEARFUL, BECAUSE THE SAFETY OF MANY PEOPLE RESTED WITH HIM. DO YOU THINK PAUL FULFILLED THIS DESCRIPTION?

3. PAUL'S WARNING ABOUT THE FUTURE-

VS 28 WHAT IS PAUL'S WARNING? 1. _____ AND

2. _____ (WHO IS PAUL INSTRUCTING IN THIS VERSE?) WHO GAVE THEM THEIR POSITIONS? WHAT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY? _____

_____ THE CHURCH IS IMPORTANT TO GOD THE FATHER BECAUSE HIS NAME IS ON IT-"THE CHURCH OF GOD". IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE SON BECAUSE HE SHED HIS BLOOD FOR IT, AND IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT BECAUSE HE IS CALLING AND EQUIPPING PEOPLE TO MINISTER TO THE CHURCH.

VS 29 WHAT DOES PAUL WARN US ABOUT IN THIS VERSE? _____
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE "SAVAGE WOLVES"? HOW DO WE KNOW THEM?

VS 30 "SPEAKING PERVERSE THINGS" WHERE DO THESE PEOPLE COME FROM?

BECAUSE OF PEOPLE WITHIN THE CHURCH WHO ARE AMBITIOUS FOR POSITION AND POWER. THEY LOVE TO HAVE PREEMINENCE.

PAUL IS GOING TO GIVE US FIVE SINS THAT ARE ESPECIALLY DESTRUCTIVE TO THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF SPIRITUAL LEADERS IN THE CHURCH. (31-35)

VS 31 HE WARNS US OF CARELESSNESS. "BE ON THE ALERT".

VS 32 HE WARNS US OF SHALLOWNESS. WHAT BUILDS US UP?

VS 33 HE WARNS US OF COVETOUSNESS. WHAT ARE WE DO?

VS 34 HE WARNS US OF LAZINESS. WHAT WOULD THAT LOOK LIKE IN OUR LIVES TODAY?

VS 35 HE WARNS US OF SELFISHNESS. REMEMBER JESUS BECAME POOR THAT WE MIGHT BECOME RICH. (2 COR. 8:9)

VS 36-38 IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY GOOD-BYE, ESPECIALLY IF YOU KNOW YOU WILL NOT SEE THEM AGAIN. BUT WHAT IS THE BLESSED ASSURANCE WE HAVE THAT ONE DAY WE WILL SEE OUR LOVED ONES AND OUR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS IN HEAVEN.

MEANWHILE THE LORD HAS GIVEN EACH ONE OF US A JOB TO DO-SO, LET'S DO IT!

