

# Acts 20:1-12

## Macedonia, Greece, Troas

### Paul Leaves Ephesus for Macedonia (Acts 20:1)

*“When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia.”* Paul had already planned on leaving Ephesus (see Acts 19:21). He had been in Ephesus for nearly 3 years (the longest he had stayed in any city in any of his missionary journeys). The riot caused Paul to stay in Ephesus a bit longer but now that it was over, he was able to move on. Notice the details of Acts 20:1—before Paul bid the disciples good-bye, he took one last chance to encourage them.

### Issues with Corinth

At this point we need to read between the lines and recognize that there were other things going on with Paul than what Luke reveals to us. Piecing together evidence from the Corinthian letters, as well as Romans and Galatians, we ascertain that Paul was deeply concerned about the state of the Corinthian brethren at this time. Let’s make a timeline.

- Paul planted the Corinthian church in Acts 18:1-18. Paul had stayed in Corinth for nearly 2 years. This happened during Paul’s second missionary journey (we’re now on the 3<sup>rd</sup>).
- At one point or another, Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians. This is evident from 1 Corinthians 5:9. This letter is lost. The purpose this letter was to warn the Corinthians about sexual immorality which was rampant in the city.
- Sometime after writing the first letter, Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, the letter we know of as 1 Corinthians. The purpose of 1 Corinthians was to heal the schisms that had arisen in the church.
- Sometime during Paul’s 3 year stay in Ephesus he visited Corinth. We know this because of 2 Corinthians 2:1 and 13:1. Paul’s visit to the Corinthians was described by Paul as “painful”—it went terribly wrong.
- This led Paul to write a 3<sup>rd</sup> letter to the Corinthians (not 2 Corinthians which is actually the 4<sup>th</sup> letter). We know this because of 2 Corinthians 7:8. This letter was described by Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:3-4 as being written out of “great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears.”
- This 3<sup>rd</sup> letter to the Corinthians was sent by Paul with Titus. Titus was to deliver the letter and return to Paul with news of its result.
- Paul had planned on going to Troas in order to preach the gospel (2 Corinthians 2:12). Titus knew to meet Paul, not in Ephesus, but in Troas.
- Paul left Ephesus and was on his way to Macedonia. First however, as mentioned above, Paul went to Troas to preach the gospel. There he waited for Titus *but Titus never showed up* (see 2 Corinthians 2:13)! Paul was still anxious about the Corinthians but he had to move on. Thus he headed west to Macedonia.

## **Paul Goes Through Macedonia to Greece (Acts 20:2-3a)**

*“He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months.”* It is a mystery why Luke omits the collection. The collection was such a vital part of Paul’s ministry. In Romans 15:25-26 Paul wrote about his plan to collect money from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia in order to bring it to the saints in Jerusalem (who apparently were struggling financially). This is why Paul told the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 the same thing he told the Galatians—to store up their money *so that when he arrived no collections needed to be made*. From Troas, Paul sailed west to Philippi. It is assumed that in Philippi Paul finally met up with Titus. This is evident from 2 Corinthians 7:13-16. Titus brought to Paul a fairly good report (despite the fact that there were still some problems) and that the Corinthians had remained true to their pledge to store up their funds for the saints in Jerusalem. It was there in Philippi, in A.D. 55, that Paul wrote 2 Corinthians—his 4<sup>th</sup> letter to that church. Paul sent Titus *back* to Corinth along with an unnamed brother and the letter (see 2 Corinthians 8:18). Despite some of the problems Paul was having with the Corinthians regarding those “super-apostles” who were attempting to discredit him, Paul’s letter reminded the Corinthians to come through with their pledge (see 2 Corinthians 8:11). Although Titus and this other brother were sent to the Corinthians ahead of Paul, Paul himself planned on visiting Corinth to pick up the collection—after he visited the churches in Macedonia (see 2 Corinthians 13:1). Paul stayed in Macedonia (those churches included the Thessalonica and Berea) and then went to Corinth where he stayed for 3 months. Evidently his relationship with the Corinthians was healed. It was there in Corinth that Paul probably wrote his letter to the Romans.

## **A Plot to Kill Paul (Acts 20:3a-6)**

After staying in Corinth for 3 months, Paul was ready to sail from Corinth to Jerusalem to deliver the gift. However, Paul discovered that the Jews had plotted to kill Paul there. As a result Paul went back north and then west, through Macedonia and unto Philippi. This derailed the “plot.” Luke mentions that Paul had several companions. It seems likely that, besides Timothy of course, these companions were representatives from various churches. They were instrumental in encouraging the Gentile Christians to give. Furthermore, the money was in coins and so it would have been wise indeed to have several people go with Paul, not only to help him physically transport it but also to protect him (and the money) from bandits. These companions are mentioned throughout Paul’s letters. *“These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.”* Back in Acts 16, Luke stayed in Philippi while Paul, Timothy, and Silas went to Thessalonica. Now, while Paul traveled through Philippi to go to Macedonia, Luke came with him. Paul’s companions went ahead to Troas while Luke and Paul stayed in Philippi until after the Passover (which was 7 days). We can note two things about this. 1) The Christians were not yet celebrating “Easter” as it is known. 2) Paul might have been celebrating the Passover. 3) Luke mentions the Passover feast in order for us to get a sense of time. From Philippi, Paul and Luke traveled to Troas—again. It was Paul’s second trip there.

## **Meeting on Sunday (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.”* The disciples met together on Sunday. One might think it was Saturday night for, according to Jewish reckoning, the day begins on the previous evening. However, it seems more likely that Luke was referring to the Roman reckoning, where the day began at midnight (our reckoning as well). A question arises from this passage: *Was this meeting incidental or did the church always meet on the first day of the week?* At face value it might seem that this meeting, which happened to be on Sunday, was incidental. However, when we consider the fact that Paul told the Corinthians *and* the Galatians to store up their funds on the first day of the week, it seems obvious that Paul assumed that the church was meeting together on that day. Sunday was the day Jesus rose from the dead—“the Lord’s Day” (see [Revelation 1:10](#)). Furthermore, we are told that the purpose of the disciples coming together in Troas was “to break bread.” *Was this an incidental meal or the supper of the Lord?* Again, at face value it seems incidental. However, if their meeting on Sunday was purposeful, so was their purpose for assembling. Thus we can be certain that the early church came together every Sunday to eat of the Lord’s supper. The extra-biblical evidence supports this. Keep in mind, of course, that this was *not* an ordinary meeting. Paul was in town and he was going to leave the next day, so he kept on talking.

## **Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas (Acts 20:8-12)**

While Paul was talking, Luke tells us that *“there were many lamps in the upstairs room where [they] were meeting.”* This created a warm atmosphere and may have contributed to what happened next. A young man (perhaps a teenager) named Eutychus was seated “in a window.” As Paul kept on talking, Eutychus fell asleep and tragically fell out of the window. He was three stories high and was killed by the fall. Paul went down to save the day (notice he was the only one who could). *“Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him.”* Paul raised Eutychus from the dead. This miracle is very reminiscent of Elijah (1 Kings 17:21) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:34). Furthermore, this miracle reminds us of Jesus raising the widow’s son (Luke 7:11-15), the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:49-50), and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). Moreover, Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-41). After Paul raised Eutychus, Luke tells us that they *“went upstairs again and broke bread and ate.”* Many people assume that this “breaking of bread” was a fellowship meal and thus different from the “breaking of bread” in verse 7. This is false. Acts 20:7 merely *states the purpose* of their meeting; verse 11 records the actual event. Yes, the Lord’s supper was indeed a supper dedicated to the Lord. At this point we see a chilling “coincidence”—Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday and broke bread with his disciples (Luke 24:30). In Troas, Eutychus was raised from the dead, then the disciples broke bread with each other. This is no coincidence, nor is meeting on Sunday merely incidental. Luke is telling us that the Lord’s Day is all about disciples of Christ celebrating the resurrection—their resurrection—through the breaking of bread in memory and honor of the risen Christ! Paul continued to talk. He was all about encouraging disciples! It was a long but great day for all!