

Acts 20:1-12

1-3 This is a very abbreviated account of Paul's departure from Ephesus and trip through Macedonia to Philippi. 2 Corinthians 1-7 gives a lot more detail of this time period and ministry. The uproar was the silversmith uprising over the declining sales of idols because of Paul's effective ministry. This was not a forced departure, but took place right when he had planned to leave. (1Corinthians 16:8 in the year 55 Pentecost fell on May 25th) He had stayed for 3 years. He is on his way to visit the churches he established and receive a collection for the church in Jerusalem.

Paul was especially concerned with the Corinthian church. He had written a disciplinary letter and sent it by Titus. He wanted to meet Titus and see how it went, so he went first to Troas. (2 Corinthians 2:12) Not finding Titus there, he went on to Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 2:12-13) After meeting Titus (in Philippi?) and hearing that it went well he wrote the letter of 2 Corinthians. It was probably during this trip that Paul first preached in Illyricum (Romans 15:19) in the northwest portion of the Balkan Peninsula.

Paul's mission was not only to take up a collection, but to encourage the congregations. Encouragement in the faith is one of the main reasons we gather to worship. (Hebrews 10:25) The return to Greece is probably to Corinth with Titus where he stayed 3 months dealing with the struggles he had written about.

4 Learning of a plot in Syria (Antioch, probably to rob and stone him), he went through Macedonia instead. The list of men are those appointed by the churches to bring their gifts. (1 Corinthians 16:3) Aristarchus will visit Paul in prison at Caesarea and accompany him to Rome. Tychicus will also minister to Paul during his Roman imprisonment. He was with Paul when he wrote Ephesians and Colossians. He faithfully served him. 2 Timothy 4:12

5-6 Paul was in Philippi for Passover, and note the change to "we". Last time we saw Luke was when he was in Philippi, so this may indicate that he stayed there and now rejoins Paul. Note the detail of "5 days" and "seven days" after Luke joined them.

7 The group stayed in Troas for 7 days (probably waiting for their ship to set sail). During that time they worshiped with the church at Troas on Sunday. Meeting on Sunday is also mentioned in 1Corinthians 16:1-2. Believers would follow their time of worship with a meal in which they remembered the Lord's death (communion). Slaves and tradesmen would not be available to attend a service until the evening. The service probably started late, but because this was a special opportunity to hear from the Apostle Paul, they stayed up late.

8 –9 The Roman insulas were often 3 stories with a shop on the bottom and rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors. They were more like apartments than single dwellings. Eutychus means “fortunate” but unfortunately, he succumbed to the weariness of his body, the build up of CO2 from the people and lamps, and after a days work, he fell into a deep sleep. He had probably gone to the window to try and fight his drowsiness. Luke does not say he appeared to be dead, but he was in fact dead. Remember Luke is a physician.

10 See 9:36-41 and 1 Kings 17:17-24 and 2Kings 4:33-36. In the Old Testament cases they prayed and laid on the person attempting to bring them back to life. Did Paul pray the prayer of 1Kings 17:21? Was he following the pattern of the story he knew or miraculously led of the Holy Spirit? The symbolism is of course that Jesus has the power of resurrection and will raise us at the last day. Remember this is immediately following Passover in which the church has recounted Jesus’ resurrection. Here was a visible reminder that Jesus is the resurrection and life.

11-12 Paul preached till dawn! And you thought our services are long!

About a year ago in Mozambique a team was showing the Jesus film to natives that had gathered from various tribes. The Wesleyan churches in the area numbered about 300. After the film, there were a great number of conversions. As the crowd headed back down a main road to their various villages, they came across an Imam whose child had drowned that morning. She had been dead for several hours and, in the local custom, was laid in front of the house for family to mourn her passing. The excited new converts gathered around the child and wanted to pray for her, but the Imam insisted that it was against the Koran to pray for the dead. The crowd had just watched Jesus raise Jairus daughter and seen Jesus walk out of the grave. They didn’t know those things weren’t supposed to happen today, so they gathered around and prayed. The child came to life! The church grew in a short time to 15,000! Since the Wesleyan church leans toward cessation theology, they had to send emissaries to investigate the validity of the story. When they confirmed it was true, they decided they needed to train up pastors, so Pastor Frank is going to spend a few weeks there teaching this winter. Jesus is the resurrection and the life today!