

Bible Study: Acts

(Part 10-Chapters 19-21)

by Gary T. Panell

Chapter 19

"Paul spent about three years altogether ministering in Ephesus (compare Acts 20:31). [Even though 19:10 says two years, here it is speaking about how long Paul was in the lecture hall of Tyrannus, but he was also three months in the synagogue before this (19:8). By Jewish reckoning of time, any part of a year is considered a year; so this period can be spoken of three years.]

"Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears." (Acts 20:31) *"all. in the province of Asia heard. (Acts 19:10)*

"One of the elements of Paul's missionary strategy is seen here. Many of the cities where Paul planted churches were strategic centers that, when evangelized, served as focal points from which the gospel radiated out to the surrounding area. Other examples are Antioch in Pisidia (see 13:14), Thessalonica (see 17:1), Athens (see 17:15) and Corinth (see 18:1)." (NIV Study Bible)

"Although Paul himself probably did not travel around the province of Asia, many of his Ephesian converts did. It was probably during this period that the 'seven churches of Asia' (Revelation 2 and 3), as well as the churches at Colosse and Hierapolis were founded.

"Paul's letter to the Colossians indicates that he had not actually visited Colosse (Colossians 1:4; 2:1), but knew about it. The key role of Ephesus is further indicated by the fact that, according to firm testimony of the early Christians, the Apostle John later became its chief bishop, and that the first of the seven letters sent through him by Christ to the churches was directed to the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7)." *(The Defender's Study Bible)*

"Notice that **special** miracles were [done] by Paul at Ephesus. This was granted Paul, because Ephesus was the headquarters of idolatry in Asia. It was a stronghold of the powers of darkness. Because of this God gave additional power to His servant to triumph over Satan." *(Through the Bible, Book by Book by Myer Pearlman)*

(13-17) Actually we pick up this study from the last phrase of verse 12 where it says, "...and the evil spirits went out of them."

"Sceva, a Jewish chief priest. May have been related to the high priestly family of Jerusalem. But more likely he took this title himself to make further impression with his magical wiles. Drawn by Paul's ability to drive out evil spirits, Jewish exorcists wanted to copy his work." *(NIV Study Bible)*

exorcists. The city of Ephesus was notorious in the ancient world not only for its idols but also for an abundance of magicians and other occultists. Demon possession was common and, therefore, there

were also practitioners of exorcism. Among them were the 'wandering Jews,' who professed to be able to invoke the supposedly unpronounceable name of the Lord over those possessed. The seven sons of Sceva (professed to be a chief priest) were not Christians, but they saw that Paul had been more effective than other exorcists in casting out demons, and so decided that the name of Jesus was itself strong magic." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

"Some professional exorcists (those who made a business of casting out demons) attempted to use that name through which Paul had performed miracles. They suffered severely for their rashness. Their punishment taught the Ephesians that the name of **Jesus** was a powerful name, a sacred name which could not be taken in vain." (*Through the Bible, Book by Book*)

[For instructions on how to cast out demons look at our [Ephesians Study, Part Six.](#)]

(17-18) "the authority of **the name of the Lord Jesus** has been granted only to believers (Mark 16:17; see Luke 10:17-20). The name of Jesus is not given as a magical phrase calculated to guarantee good or bad results. There is no guarantee of power when it is capriciously uttered, particularly when the situation involves an ecclesiastical or stylized exercise. However, when employed in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit, His might and glory may be expected to be manifested. Inherent in the name of Jesus is not only the resource of His authority, but also the fullness of His nature and character. Thus, any prayer offered or ministry attempted in the name of Jesus must be in accord with His nature and purpose." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

When people are truly saved they will want to burn and destroy what has hindered them in their worship of God. Also, they don't want others to get their hands on such demonic material. I might add that this same thing happens when Christians get right with God. Here is the true account of this happening in Argentina when through reading the Word of God their lives were changed forever!

"The people showed an unusual hunger for the Word of God and purchased all the Bibles we could obtain. The Bible was once again a 'best seller.' Before they came to the stadium, the Bible had been an unknown book to them. They had been thoroughly ignorant of its existence or its contents.

"'Come to my house to explain this library of books (the Bible) that I've just purchased,' said the elderly man when he invited us to his home to teach him to understand the Bible. Utterly ignorant of any of the Biblical characters or even the location of the books of the Bible, this man was one of many others just like him. It could have been said of Necochea, 'The Word of the Lord was rare, or scarce, in those days.'

"Without any admonition from us, the people automatically abandoned their idolatry which they somehow felt was wrong, and they spontaneously destroyed their images, beads, idols, idol pictures and fetishes.

"'I'm going to burn my images,' said a wife as she appeared one day with her arms full of idols. Her shocked husband who had also been reared in Catholicism asked, 'Why don't you bury them?' She promptly replied, 'I can't for if I bury them the field would be contaminated and the basket as well.' So she went out to burn them just as the Bible taught, **though she was ignorant of its teachings on the subject.**

"Lighting candles and offering flowers, the unsaved sister of an evangelical preacher faithfully knelt before a small idol in her home every Friday. A few days before she attended the stadium services for the first time, she stood before her idol preparing the ritual. Somehow she felt she mustn't light the candles and offer the flowers, although she didn't understand why. Somehow it just seemed wrong. Determinedly she arose, abandoning her idol unadorned. Soon afterwards she gave her heart to the Lord in the stadium. 'Now I understand,' she said, 'why I abandoned my idol. God was already working in my heart.'

"A famous idol-The Virgin Fatima-had been brought by her priests to Necochea to bless the stadium and to work miracles. 'The Holy Mission of Fatima' had ended without any miracles shortly before our campaign began. The local priest, desirous of stopping the meetings and stirred by reports of healings among his parishioners, complained strenuously to the stadium owner, a prosaic businessman.

"Why do you allow those evangelicals to have services here when the Virgin just recently blessed this stadium?" the priest asked.

"You are mistaken, Father,' replied the owner who was now convinced that God was truly working miracles among the people, 'The Virgin didn't bless the stadium at all; she didn't even open her mouth. It was you who blessed it. Furthermore, the stadium is a place of business, open for rental to all who can pay for it.' The campaign continued on. Later, word reached us that the airplane carrying the idol had crashed in flames destroying the idol and the priests who accompanied it. Obviously the image was powerless to save either herself or others." (*The Flaming Flame* by R. Edward Miller)

Then this is another true story of what happened in Cambodia when a demon possessed man was delivered.

"Just after sundown, while the sky was still lit bright orange, we stood to leave. At that moment we heard shouting from outside. 'Watch out!' a voice cried from the road. 'Grab him! Don't let him go!'

"Saran quickly darted out the door and I followed him [missionary Todd Burke], telling the women to stay indoors. Lying on the street was a skinny young man, kicking and rolling in the dust. Several men were trying to grab him and hold him down, but with unusual strength he was resisting them. The men trying to control him were fighting a losing battle.

"What's wrong with him?' I questioned Saran. 'Is he mad?' 'Yes. He has demon,' Saran said curtly. Moving in closer, Saran instructed the men, 'Step back!' With puzzled looks on their faces, they moved away. The fellow was now on his feet, frothing at the mouth and kicking the dust like a bull about to charge. Saran pointed his finger at him. 'In Jesus' name I bind your power, demon; I command you to leave!' he spoke sternly.

"The demon-possessed man lunged toward Saran. Then falling to the dust he lay silent. Every eye was fixed on Saran. For the next half hour I looked on while he explained what had happened and preached the gospel to the awestruck crowd.

"The demons know who Jesus is,' he shouted to the people. 'They're afraid of Him. They know He is Lord and Savior. If you will receive Him tonight you can have His power.'

"Saran's delivery of the gospel message carried an air of authority and a strong appeal. He told how he had once studied to be a witch doctor, but then heard the message of Jesus Christ and realized He was truly the Son of God with all power. 'The night I received Jesus,' he declared, 'I ran home and loaded my arms with all the items I had used in sorcery. I took them out to the street and burned them where everyone could see. I wanted everyone to know that I was now following Jesus!'

"His listeners were captivated as he shared how God had saved him. After the crowd dispersed, DeAnn and I went home rejoicing over Saran's bold witness and the effect it had on his neighbors. He began holding a meeting in his neighborhood each evening after that, and many came to the Lord." (*Anointed for Burial* by Todd and DeAnn Burke)

God's deliverance from demon possession for a man in India, as recorded by K.P. Johanna ([Gospel for Asia](#)) in his book *Revolution in World Missions*.

"As I traveled, viewing the effects of pagan religions on India, I realized that the masses of India are starving because they are slaves to sin. The battle against hunger and poverty is really a spiritual battle, not a physical or social one as secularists would have us believe.

"The only weapon that will ever effectively win the war against disease, hunger, injustice and poverty in Asia is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To look into the sad eyes of a hungry child or see the wasted life of a drug addict is to see only the evidence of Satan's hold on this world. All bad things are his handiwork. He is the ultimate enemy of mankind, and he will do everything within his considerable power to kill and destroy human beings. Fighting this powerful enemy with physical weapons is like fighting an armored tank with stones.

"I can never forget one of the more dramatic encounters we had with these demonic powers. It was a hot and unusually humid day in 1970. We were preaching in the northwestern state of Rajasthan- the 'desert of kings.'

"As was our practice before a street meeting, my seven coworkers and I stood in a circle to sing and clap hands to the rhythm of Christian folk songs. A sizeable crowd gathered, and I began to speak in Hindi, the local language. Many heard the Gospel for the first time and eagerly took our tracts to read.

"One young man came up to me and asked for a book to read. As I talked to him, I sensed in my spirit that he was hungry to know God. When we got ready to climb aboard our Gospel van, he asked to join us.

"As the van lurched forward, he cried and wailed. 'I am a terrible sinner,' he shrieked. 'How can I sit among you?' With that he started to jump from the moving van. We held on to him and forced him to the floor to prevent injury.

"That night he stayed at our base and the next morning joined us for the prayer meeting. While we were praising and interceding, we heard a sudden scream. The young man was lying on the ground, tongue lolling out of his mouth, his eyes rolled back.

"As Christians in a pagan land, we knew immediately he was demon-possessed. We gathered around him and began taking authority over the forces of hell as they spoke through his mouth.

"We are 74 of us. For the past seven years we have made him walk barefoot all over India. He is ours.' They spoke on, blaspheming and cursing, challenging us and our authority.

"But as three of us prayed, the demons could not keep their hold on the young man. They came out when we commanded them to leave in the name of Jesus.

"Sundar John was delivered, gave his life to Jesus and was baptized. Later he went to Bible College for two years. Since then the Lord has enabled him to teach and preach to thousands of people about Christ. Several native Indian churches have started as a result of his remarkable ministry-all from a man many people would have locked up in an insane asylum. And there are literally millions of people like him in India-deceived by demons and enslaved to their horrible passions and lust.

"This kind of miracle kept me going from village to village for those seven years of itinerant preaching. Our lives read like pages from the book of Acts. Most nights we slept between villages in roadside ditches, where we were relatively safe. Sleeping in non-Christian villages would expose us to many dangers. Our team created a stir, and at times we even faced stonings and beatings.

"The mobile Gospel teams I worked with-and often led-were just like family to me. I began to enjoy the gypsy lifestyle we lived and the total abandonment to the cause of Christ that is demanded of an itinerant evangelist. We were persecuted, hated and despised. Yet we kept going, knowing that we were blazing a trail for the Gospel in districts that had never before experienced an encounter with Christ." (*Revolution in World Missions* by K.P. Yohannan, Founder and President of Gospel for Asia)

"Most Americans don't think in terms of demon possession. We think in terms of disease. If we see a young man beating his head into the ground or throwing himself into a fire, we do not automatically consider the man demon-possessed; we say he is mentally ill. We give complex medical names to multiple personality disorders and various psychotic behaviors and try to treat these problems with unpronounceable, expensive, mind-altering drugs.

"Missionaries to Third World countries, however, have a different perspective. They understand that not all these illnesses can be treated medically; some must be treated spiritually. 'Look at his eyes,' a missionary friend once told me as he showed me a photograph of a man to whom he was ministering in New Guinea. 'He is demon-possessed. The eyes give it away.'

"I've heard many a missionary speak of demon possession. But perhaps the most amazing account-and the most helpful-came from a man (I'll call him John) who spent many years preaching the gospel and planting churches in the jungles of New Guinea. It was through a frightening experience that he learned how to deal with the Devil and how to help those of us who live elsewhere do likewise.

"While walking alone to a native village, John began to hear loud, horrifying shrieks echo through the air. As the terrifying noises grew closer and louder, everything around him grew darker; and he was seized with fear. Soon he could see nothing in a world dominated by wild animals, poisonous snakes, and quicksand; and he could hear nothing but the bloodcurdling screams penetrating the jungle. Now in utter darkness, he slowly felt himself sinking deeper and deeper into the ground. *I've stepped into quicksand*, he thought, *and I will surely die.*

"His life flashed before him and thoughts of his wife, his children, and all the people to whom he would never have an opportunity to say goodbye. As he was praying to God for help, he suddenly yelled at the top of his lungs, 'Greater is he that is in [me] than he that is in the world' (1 John 4:4, KJV).

"Instantly the screaming stopped and bright sunshine lit the sky. John looked down, saw he was standing on a log, stepped off it, and continued his walk to the village. From then on, he said, he was a changed man. He realized more fully than ever the power of Jesus Christ.

"So John began memorizing Scripture as never before. Using the pattern Jesus set for us in Matthew 4 when He was tempted by Satan, John began using the sword of the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit to resist the Devil. 'Try to use a verse appropriate to your situation,' he said." (*Israel My Glory, A Ministry of The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc. July/August 2007 by Lorna Simcox, editor-in-chief*)

Just before we leave this section and get back into the text of Scripture, I would like to add that in Trinidad, West Indies, where we were missionaries, we did have to deal with demon possession. I remember one girl who was pregnant and demon possessed. As Evangelist KK and myself were praying for her—all of a sudden, I felt like I was being strangled, I think KK felt this same thing, I raised my hands to pray, and pleaded the blood of Jesus. He did bring deliverance, and the sensation of strangling went away. Then we could go on to pray for deliverance for the girl.

The demon would talk through the girl, but in his voice, "I am going to kill the baby." We said, "No, you are not!" "We claim this baby in the name of Jesus, and you cannot hurt it!" The girl was delivered, not only from several demons who had possessed her, but later, she delivered a beautiful baby girl. We have the picture of her smiling face holding the precious little one in her arms.

Remember Satan has power, but he is also a bluffer, and a deceiver! He will try to make us think he has power over us. We need to take authority in the name of Jesus, and **through His blood**, we have more power than Satan. So often I hear Christians say, "My spouse wants to divorce me," or they say, "I am so depressed," or "There is no answer to this problem in my life." Those are lies from the Devil, and you need to understand this, and use the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, against him!

Just one other short story before we have to get back to where we left off. One night, a girl who had been demon possessed but delivered and saved, was walking down the road in Trinidad, West Indies, and she became frightened by a demon. He was not able to possess her again, but was able to give her a severe headache and could even use her vocal cords to speak through her. The demon would say things like, "I can't get down in there, that man is down in there [speaking disrespectfully of Jesus]!" Evangelist KK and I prayed for her, and she was healed. We then had to teach her how to use the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, Ephesians 6:17. You and I need to do this when the Roaring Lion comes our way.

(19-20) "Even in non-biblical records of the time, Ephesus had the reputation of being a center of magical practices. **Fifty thousand pieces of silver**: This is probably a reference to 50,000 Greek drachmae, a coin which was roughly equivalent to one day's wage, so the cumulative value of these magic books was enormous." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"The value of these books at today's prices would be about a million dollars [at least]. "This striking verse is a remarkable testimony both to the tremendous prevalence of pagan occultism in Ephesus and also to the wonderful power of the gospel to overcome this." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

I was going to leave this here, but the Lord will not let me. He wants me to finish a statement from Myer Pearlman where he states in his *New Testament Gospels and Acts Part III*: "Many believers were affected by this incident and confessed some of their sins, especially the sin of dabbling in the occult sciences." I was not going to put this in because I know they were Christians that burned this 'garbage,' but I was thinking it was only new believers that had this paraphernalia, but evidently not so.

Then to confirm this, the Lord had me hear on the radio, at the very time I was thinking about this, a Calvary Chapel program (so we know it is sound information). The speaker was speaking about a revival that took place in Alaska. He said that God got a hold of the Christians in a church there, and had them repent of their sins of reading, listening, and watching things that were not of the Lord. They in turn took these all out and burned these articles, which he said amounted to thousands of dollars, I want to say more than \$50,000, but don't quote me on that part-let's just say a lot of money.

As a result the church started having revival, confessing their sins, and getting right with God. They were then praying together when the walls of the building starting shaking. The speaker, said he knows this is true because he saw a video of it. At any rate it reminded me of what we talked about in Acts 4:31, "And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with **boldness**."

The speaker went on to say, I believe God wants us to go around our homes and see what might be there that is displeasing to the Lord. We need to clean house, as it were, and put Christ first in our lives once again, if we are to be used of Him. We need to confess our sins as 1 John 1:9 says. Maybe we have watched things on television that we should not have watched. Maybe we have seen videos that are displeasing to our Lord Jesus.

Maybe we have read books or looked at magazines and pictures that are not becoming for a Christian to read or look at. We need to get on our knees before the Lord and confess these things as sin, and get right with God ourselves, if we ever are to be bold witnesses for Him.

Maybe instead of watching T.V., we could read the Bible more and meditate on it. Maybe we could read good Christian literature that we get in the mail or books that please the Lord, like missionary biographies. How about reading good devotional materials and spending more time with the Lord in prayer? No wonder we don't see the same miracles they saw in the book of Acts, when we are so far away from the Lord! Jesus said to the church of Ephesus, "Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left [notice: left, not *lost*] your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place-unless you repent." (Revelation 2:4-5) I believe He is saying this to us today!

Then we would see revival in our own lives and in our country! "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 Do we have to wait for persecution to hit to serve the Lord?! [We have a two year daily [Bible](#)

[Meditation chart](#) if you are interested, and [Part two of the Acts Bible Study](#) goes into the importance of prayer.]

(21) Luke next states Paul's purpose for his future ministry. It could be '**purposed in the spirit**' referring to Paul's spirit (AV, NIV, NASB), or to the leading of the Holy Spirit (NKJV, RSV) '**purposed in the Spirit.**' We get into this discussion more in Chapter 21 and verse 4.

"The apostle planned to revisit the churches in **Macedonia** and **Achaia** to collect money for the needy saints in **Jerusalem** (2 Corinthians 8; 9; Romans 15:25ff.).

"After taking this collection to Jerusalem, he intended to visit **Rome**. **He** did not plan an extended ministry there, but wished to visit the Roman Christians on his way to Spain (Romans 15:24, 28). It was his policy to preach the Gospel where it had not been heard, and not to build upon another man's foundation (Romans 15:20). [He was truly a Missionary (Apostle) in every sense of the word, wanting to preach where no one had gone before.]

"Notice that Paul's missionary vision is widening; he must preach at Rome.

(22) "Verses 23 to 41 record an incident which testifies in a concrete way of Paul's success in Ephesus. He had struck such a blow at this great fortress of Satan that the worship of Diana was waning. This alarmed the makers of idols who raised an uproar against Paul.

"During his stay at Ephesus, Paul wrote the first epistle to the Corinthians. After Paul's departure, serious disorders broke out in the Corinthian church. The church was divided; immorality was tolerated, brother was suing brother at law [in court], and the Lord's Supper had been degraded to the level of a common meal. To correct these abuses, and to answer some questions they had asked concerning marriage, meat and the gifts of the Spirit, Paul wrote them a letter [1 Corinthians]." (*Through the Bible Book By Book*)

"Paul sent **Timothy** and **Erastus**, two of his associates, ahead into **Macedonia**, intending to follow them shortly. Luke does not mention Timothy between the time he rejoined Paul at Corinth (18:5) and this point; but he had been with the apostle in Ephesus. Neither does Luke record events that took place between Paul and the Corinthian church while the missionary was in Ephesus. Paul had previously sent Timothy to Corinth to deal with certain problems in the church (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10, 11). In addition, the older missionary himself had paid a flying visit there as is reported in 2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

(23-27) "'Diana' is from the Greek *Artemis*, an ancient and mythological goddess of the moon, the outdoors, and all forms of life and fertility. 'Diana' is her Roman name. Diana of the Ephesians was a particular image of Artemis which was reputed to have fallen from heaven (v. 35)." (*New Scofield Reference Edition*)

Diana was the Roman name of Artemis, the Greek goddess of love and fertility; and Ephesus was the home of her great temple (vv. 34,35), acclaimed as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"Diana (same as Artemis) was not only the goddess of hunting, but was considered-at least in Asia and in many other places around the Graeco/Roman world-to be the 'mother goddess' of all nature, much like Gaia, the goddess currently being widely promoted as Mother Earth in the New-Age movement. The temple of Diana at Ephesus was so magnificent that it was considered one of the 'seven wonders of the world' in ancient times." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

(28-30) "The mob spirit of the silversmiths spread like a contagion throughout the city and gave rise to a public demonstration in the open-air **theatre**. The ruins of this theater have been uncovered; it could hold over twenty thousand people. Since Paul was not at the moment available, the crowd seized two of his associates; and when the apostle purposed to go out to face the crowd, other disciples would not let him do so.

(33-34) "Some of the **Jews** in the crowd felt that they were in danger of being blamed for the riot. Therefore they put forward a man named **Alexander** to make a speech and clear them of guilt. But their spokesman was shouted down, and chaos prevailed." (*Wycliffe*)

(35-36) "*image which fell down*. This tradition was derived from the fact that a large meteorite had fallen from the sky into Ephesus. It apparently had a shape which the pagan leaders of Ephesus interpreted as a many-breasted female which they identified as an image of the goddess. "Copies of this image thereafter became both commercially and religiously profitable to the Ephesians. Renaissance scholars denied that such an event could ever have happened until other meteorite falls began to be documented in modern times." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

"the Roman goddess Diana. She had taken on the characteristics of Cybele, the mother goddess of fertility worshiped in Asia Minor and served by many prostitute priestesses. A meteorite may be the basis of the many-breasted image of heavenly workmanship claimed for Artemis. reproductions of the original image from the time of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81-96) have been found in Ephesus." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"City clerk. The secretary of the city who published the decisions of the civic assembly. He was the most important local official and the chief executive officer of the assembly, acting as go-between for Ephesus and the Roman authorities.

(38) "*courts. proconsuls*. Probably general terms, not intended to refer to more than one court or one proconsul. As capital city of the province of Asia, Ephesus was the headquarters for the proconsul.

(39-41) "*legal assembly*. The regular civil meeting ordinarily held three times a month." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"The silversmiths feared the loss of their business. The town clerk pointed out that their real danger lay in the possibility of their being accused by the Romans of **rioting**, since no reason could be given to justify the confused gathering. These words quieted the mob and dispersed the assembly." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

Chapter 20

(1) "The purpose of Paul to revisit Macedonia and Achaia, stated in 19:21 [collect money for the needy believers in Jerusalem], was now carried out. The apostle's departure from Ephesus is reflected in 2

Corinthians. When he arrived at Troas, a great opportunity to preach the Gospel presented itself to him, but his concern for the troubles in the Corinthian church did not give him freedom of spirit to take advantage of it.

"Paul had previously sent Titus to Corinth to deal with the serious problems among the believers there, and he expected to meet his fellow worker in Troas. The failure of Titus to arrive as expected burdened Paul's heart, and he therefore left Troas and headed for Macedonia to meet his helper (2 Corinthians 2:12,13).

"When Titus finally came from Corinth, he brought the good news of improved conditions in the church (2 Corinthians 7:5-16). At this time Paul wrote the second letter to Corinth, sending it in advance of his own arrival by the hand of Titus and another brother (2 Corinthians 8:17-19) (*Wycliffe*)

"Paul wanted to: (1) leave Ephesus, (2) preach in Troas on his way to Macedonia, (3) meet Titus at Troas with a report from Corinth (see 2 Corinthians 2:12-13) and (4) continue collecting the offering for Judea (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9; Romans 15:25-28).

(2-3) "[Paul] may have gone to Illyricum (see Romans 15:19) at this time.

"Macedonia. It is probable that Paul visited Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea at this time. It was here that Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. It was written to encourage the great body of the church which had repented on receiving his first letter, and to warn a small party that persisted in despising his commands."

"Greece. Paul's chief mission in this country was to visit the church of Corinth to correct abuses, and to deal with a rebellious minority that refused to acknowledge his authority. While at Corinth he wrote the epistles to the Galatians and the Romans. The former was written to restore the church of Galatians which, influenced by legalistic preachers, had begun to observe the Law of Moses as a means of salvation and sanctification. The second was written to give the Roman church a statement of the great truths which Paul preached and to make known his intention of visiting them." (*Through the Bible Book By Book*)

"Paul sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his associates, ahead into Macedonia, intending to follow them shortly. Luke does not mention Timothy between the time he rejoined Paul at Corinth (18:5) at this point; but he had been with the apostle in Ephesus. Neither does Luke record events that took place between Paul and the Corinthian church while the missionary was in Ephesus. Paul had previously sent Timothy to Corinth to deal with certain problems in the church (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10, 11). In addition, the older missionary himself had paid a flying visit there as is reported in 2 Corinthians 12:14; 13:1." (*Wycliffe Bible Commentary*)

"In various ways 2 Corinthians reflects Paul's dealings with the church in Corinth during the period from the founding of the church in about A.D. 50 until the writing of this letter in A.D. 55 or 56. The various episodes in the interactions between Paul and the Corinthians can be summarized as follows:

1. The *founding visit* to Corinth lasted about eighteen months. (see Acts 18).
2. Paul wrote an *earlier letter* than 1 Corinthians (see 1 Cor. 5:9).

3. Paul wrote *1 Corinthians* from Ephesus, about A.D. 55. [Acts 19]
4. A brief but *painful visit* to Corinth caused 'sorrow' for Paul and the church (see 2 Cor. 2:1; 13:2).
5. Following the painful visit, Paul wrote a *severe letter*, delivered by Titus (see 2 Cor. 2:4; 7:6-8).
6. Paul wrote *2 Corinthians* from Macedonia, while on his way to Corinth again, in A.D. 55 or 56.
7. Paul's *final visit* to Corinth (Acts 20) was probably when he wrote Romans just before returning to Jerusalem. The *painful visit*, which Acts does not record, and the *severe letter* provide immediate background for the writing of 2 Corinthians.

"We do not possess the *severe letter*, although some scholars have suggested that 2 Corinthians 10-13 may have been part of that epistle. There is no manuscript evidence to support this view, however.

"First Corinthians [written from Ephesus, Acts 19] was not as effective as Paul had hoped in settling the crisis at Corinth. The party opposing Paul gained strength, and its leader was particularly obnoxious to him (2:5-11; 10:7-12). Paul hurriedly traveled to Corinth from Ephesus in an attempt to meet the situation. Although this visit is not mentioned in Acts, it is implied in 2 Corinthians 12:14. Paul failed to achieve his desired objective (2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1, 2), and experienced open hostility from the leader of the opposition (2:5-8; 7:12).

"Paul then returned to Ephesus, where he wrote a severe letter to the Corinthians, putting into it the full weight of his apostolic authority. He sent the letter by Titus, and then made his way to Macedonia, where Titus met him with an encouraging report (2 Cor. 2:12, 13; 7:6-16).

"The majority had been won back to Paul and had taken disciplinary action against the offender (2 Cor. 2:5-11). However, there was still a rebellious minority (chapter 10-13). Paul wrote to express a message of conciliation to the loyal majority and to rebuke the rebellious minority. He also gave instruction concerning the offering he was collecting for the impoverished church in Jerusalem." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) This information is found in the background to 2 Corinthians. You may want to look at our [2 Corinthians study](#).

(3) "*three months*. Probably a reference to the stay in Corinth, the capital of Achaia. These would be the winter months when ships did not sail regularly. Paul probably wrote Romans at this time. The Jews were determined to take Paul's life; also, at this time he was carrying the offering for the Christians in Judea, so there would have been a temptation for theft as well. The port at Cenchrea would have provided a convenient place for Paul's enemies to detect him as he entered a ship to embark for Syria." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"Luke passes over all of these activities without a word. After visiting the churches in Macedonia, Paul arrived in Greece, or Achaia, and there spent three months, probably in Corinth. During this time he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, informing the believers in Rome of his purpose to visit Jerusalem and then to come to Rome (Romans 15:22-29).

"Luke fails to mention one of the main reasons for Paul's final journey to Jerusalem: the delivery of a generous collection of money which the saints in Macedonia and Achaia had made to aid the poor (Romans 15:25-27; 2 Corinthians 8; 9).

"As Paul was about to take ship from Corinth to Syria, he learned of a plot by the Jews to kill him on this voyage. He changed his plans and, traveling by land through Macedonia, retraced his steps." (*Wycliffe*)

"These men seem to be the delegates appointed to accompany Paul and the money given for the needy in Judea (see note on 2 Corinthians 8:23). Three were from Macedonia, two from Galatia and two from Asia. Luke may have joined them at Philippi ('we sailed,' v. 6.)

(4-6) "*Troas*. Was to be the rendezvous for Paul and those who went on ahead by sea from Neapolis, the seaport of Philippi (16:11). Paul and his immediate companions stayed in Philippi before sailing a week later.

"from Philippi. For the seaport, Neapolis, about ten miles away. *Feast of Unleavened Bread*. [Days of Unleavened Bread was another way to refer to the Passover.] Began with Passover and lasted a week. Paul spent the period in Philippi. Formerly he had hoped to reach Jerusalem sooner (see 19:21), but now he hoped to arrive there for Pentecost (see 20:16). *five days later*. The voyage from Neapolis to Troas took five days. It had taken about two days the other direction (16:11). *seven days*. Although Paul was in a hurry to arrive at Jerusalem by Pentecost, he remained seven days at Troas. This might have been because of a ship schedule, but more likely the delay was in order to meet with the believers on the first day of the week to break bread.

(7-9) "*first day of the week*. Sunday. Although some maintain that they met on Saturday evening since the Jewish day began at six o'clock the previous evening, there is no indication that Luke is using the Jewish method of reporting time to tell of happenings in this Hellenistic city. *to break bread*. Here indicates the Lord's Supper, since breaking bread was the expressed purpose for this formal gathering. The Lord's Supper had been commanded (Luke 22:19), and it was observed regularly (see 2:42)." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"Although Paul was in Troas seven days (v.6), apparently neither he nor the local church met for the breaking of bread until the first day of the week (v.7). The fact that Paul and others sometimes attended Sabbath services in Jewish synagogues (17:1-3) does not prove that the apostolic Church kept the seventh day as a special day of worship. It only shows that the early missionaries took the Gospel message wherever and whenever they found people gathered together (5:19-20; 13:5; 16:13, 25-33; 17:17, 19, 22; 18:7; 19:9; 25:6, 23). This witness was carried on daily (2:47; 17:17; 19:9) in every possible way (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

"The early churches were specifically warned against submitting themselves to the bondage of any legalistic observance of Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16, cp. Galatians 4:9-11). On the other hand, in the exercise of their Christian liberty (Romans 14:5-6), these same churches voluntarily chose the first day of the week as an appropriate time for fellowship and worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2), the day on which the Lord arose and repeatedly appeared to His disciples (John 20:19-24,25-29). It was a new day for a new people belonging to a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) [a New Testament or Covenant-Comment by G. T. Panell], a day of commemoration and joy (Matthew 28:9 margin), service (Matthew 28:10, and spiritual rest (Hebrews 4:9-10). Contrast Sabbath, Matthew 12:1, *note*.

"This observance of the first day of the week is corroborated by the early fathers: in the writings of Barnabas (c. A.D. 100), Ignatius (A.D. 107), Justin Martyr (A.D. 145-150), and Irenaeus (A.D. 155-202). The edict of Laodicea (4th Century A.D.) did not change the day of worship from the seventh to the first day of the week, as sometimes alleged, but rather put the stamp of official approval upon an observance already long established in the early churches." (*New Scofield Reference Edition*)

"This is the first mention of the disciples meeting on the first day of the week, but this seems to have soon become a regular practice (1 Corinthians 16:2). For a considerable time, as long as he was welcome, Paul (presumably the others also) continued to meet and preach in the synagogues on the Sabbath day. However, as Jewish opposition became more virulent, this soon became impracticable. The last reference to this practice of meeting each Sabbath day with the Jews in the synagogue is in reference to Ephesus (Acts 19:8). Paul was finally forced to move this synagogue next door to the school of Tyrannus (an odd name for a schoolmaster, unless it was a nickname given him by his students), where he preached every day.

"It seems likely that during the period while the Jews and Christians would meet each Sabbath day, the Christians would then want to meet by themselves the next day for fellowship and study. However, this would normally have been a work day, so they would probably have had to wait until early evening to do so.

"This practice of meeting on the evening of the first day with the other disciples presumably continued after they could no longer worship in the synagogue. This would also explain why Paul was preaching at Troas until midnight and why Eutychus fell asleep (Acts 20:9). The first day of the week then eventually became known as 'the Lord's day' (Revelation 1:10).

"By worshiping and resting on that day, the Christians were keeping the Sabbath ('Sabbath' means 'rest,' not 'seventh' or 'Saturday') and also honoring the Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead on the first day of the week. He is both Creator and Redeemer and now that He has completed both great works (Genesis 2:1-3; John 19:30), it is appropriate that we remember both together this way." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

(10-12) "Paul is used by the Holy Spirit in a demonstration of the manifestation of gifts of healings or the working of miracles, in conjunction with the church's continuation of Jesus' ministry." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"*He's alive!* As Peter had raised Tabitha (9:40), so Paul raised Eutychus.

(13) "*Assos*. On the opposite side of the peninsula from Troas-about 20 miles away by land. The coastline, however, was about 40 miles. Thus Paul was not far behind the ship that sailed around the peninsula.

(14) "*Mitylene*. After the first day of sailing, they put into this harbor on the southeast shore of the island of Lesbos.

(15) "*Kios*. The second night they spent off the shore of this larger island, which lay along the west coast of Asia Minor. *Samos*. Crossing the mouth of the bay that leads to Ephesus, they came on the third day to Samos, one of the most important islands in the Aegean. *Miletus*. Thirty miles south of Ephesus, the

destination of the ship Paul was on. He would have had to change ships to put into Ephesus, which would have lost time (see v. 16). If he had come to Ephesus, he would have had to visit a number of families, which would have taken more time. If trouble should arise, as the riot of a year ago (19:23-41), even more time would be lost. It could not be risked.

(16) "*by the day of Pentecost*. Fifty days from Passover. Five days plus seven days (v.6) plus four days (vv. 13-15) had already gone by, leaving only about two thirds of the time for the remainder of the trip." (*NIV Study Bible*)

(17-18) "*elders of the church*. The importance of the leadership of elders has been evident throughout Paul's ministry. He had delivered the famine gift from the church at Antioch to the elders of the Jerusalem church (11:30). He had appointed elders on his first missionary journey (see 14:23) and had addressed the holders of this office later in Philippi (Philippians 1:1), 'overseers'. He requested the Ephesian elders to meet with him on this solemn occasion (see v. 28). Some years later he wrote down instruction about the elders' qualifications (1Timothy 3 and Titus 1).

(19-20) "*with tears*. See v. 31. Paul's ministry at Ephesus was conducted with emotional fervency and a sense of urgency." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"This was Paul's emotional farewell address to the Ephesian elders. In its written form, this passage also became a permanent word of warning and instruction to all the Gentile churches that Paul had established." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(21) "repentance toward God, and faith toward our lord Jesus Christ. Both repentance and faith were essential components of the message of Paul to non-Christians, whether Jews or Gentiles, and so should they be of our witness today. Repentance toward God and faith in Christ are like two sides of the same coin. They are distinct, yet neither true repentance nor true faith exists without the other." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

(22-24) "[I go bound in the spirit] not "compelled by the Spirit" as some versions have. "Compare 21:4. Here in v. 22 Paul's own spirit is indicated; in 21:4 the Holy Spirit is meant. Paul's motive in going to Jerusalem seems to have been his great affection for the Jews (Romans 9:1-5) and his hope that the gifts of the Gentile churches, sent by him to poor saints at Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-28), would open the hearts of the law-bound Jewish believers to the 'gospel of the grace of God' (Acts 20:24). (*New Scofield Reference Edition*) [*We look at this debate again in 21:4.*]

When Paul said, "so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." he meant this. And when later he did come to the end of his life he wrote to Timothy another similar statement: "For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

We are told by Fox's Book of Martyrs how St. Paul and St. Peter died. "The first persecution of the Church [by Rome] took place in the year 67 [A.D.] under Nero, the sixth emperor of Rome. This monarch reigned for the space of five years, with tolerable credit to himself, but then gave way to the greatest

extravagancy of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. Among other diabolical whims, he ordered that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which order was executed by his officers, guards, and servants.

"While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macaenas, played upon his harp, sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared that 'he wished the ruin of all things before his death.' Besides the noble pile [complex of buildings], called the Circus, many other palaces and houses were consumed; several thousand perished in the flames, were smothered in the smoke, or buried beneath the ruins.

"This dreadful conflagration [a large and destructive fire] continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium [disgrace resulting from hateful conduct] cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised on the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves.

"Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs until they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axletrees (poles), and set on fire in his gardens, in order to illuminate them.

"This persecution was general throughout the whole Roman Empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity. In the course of it, St. Paul and St. Peter were martyred." (*Fox's Book of Martyrs Edited by William Byron Forbush, D.D.*)

(25-26) We note in this unusual meeting of the elders of the different churches that Paul is giving his last words to them. When he says that he is innocent of the blood of all men we know that he was not referring to physical life and death, but the spiritual. "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* [*woman*] shall die in his [her] iniquity [sin]; but his [her] blood I will require at your hand. [Yes, we are, our brother's keeper, to answer Cain's question (Genesis 4:9).]

"Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. Again, when a righteous *man* [*woman*] turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous *man* [*woman*] that the righteous should not sin, and he [she] does not sin, he [she] shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul." (Ezekiel 3:18-21)

"In ancient Israel watchmen were stationed on the walls to warn people of danger and the approach of messengers..Prophets were also called watchmen (see Jeremiah 6:17; Hosea 9:8; Habakkuk 2:1)." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(27-28) "Paul did not keep back any important Bible truth because of fear of what people would think or say. Shouldn't this make us ashamed of ourselves when we fear to teach and preach about, sin,

marriage and divorce, abortion, homosexuality, creation, capital punishment, etc., because the teaching of these might hurt someone's feelings or offend them!

"*overseers. Be shepherds.* The 'elders' (v.17) were called 'overseers' and told to pastor ('shepherd') the flock-demonstrating that the same men could be called 'elders,' 'overseers' or 'pastors.' *his own blood.* Lit. 'the blood of his own one,' a term of endearment (such as 'his own dear one,' referring to his own Son)." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"overseers. The word 'overseers' is the same as 'bishops.' Since these men were the 'elders of the church' (Acts 20:17), it follows that the offices of 'elder' and 'bishop' were the same in the early church. In the Greek, 'elder' is presbuteros (from which we get our ecclesiastical term 'presbyter'), and 'bishop' is episcopos (from which 'Episcopal' is derived), meaning simply 'overseer.' The two terms are again equated in Titus 1:5,7. The word 'pastor' is the same as 'shepherd' (Greek poimen), and the elders (or bishops) have the duty of 'feeding' the 'flock' for which they are responsible" (1 Peter 5:1-5) (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

"20:28 This verse is rich with lessons about leadership in the church: 1) Take heed to yourselves means 'Pay close attention.' Leaders must first guard themselves before they can oversee the church adequately. 2) Church leaders are not self-made. They are appointed by the Spirit. 3) Overseers is from the same Greek root translated 'overshadow' in Luke 1:35. An overseer is one who covers and protects the flock. 4) The church belongs to God. He owns it because He bought it. What God does through the leaders of the church does not belong to them. In contrast, Paul warns of false leaders in vv. 29-31.

(29-30) "Characteristics of the wrong kind of leadership in the church: 1) they are more interested in themselves than the care of the flock (v.29). They will draw people after themselves (v.30).

3) "They will look for quick results that require little sacrifice (v.31)." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"your own selves [among yourselves NKJV]. It is sad, indeed, that the ordained leaders of the church have all too often in church history been responsible for leading the flock astray after some 'wind of doctrine' (Ephesians 4:14), instead of feeding the flock with the whole counsel of God." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

Paul's words have proven quite true in our day. We see 'religious leaders' denying everything in the Bible even going so far as to teach the opposite of the Bible. They deny: the Virgin Birth of Christ, that [Jesus is God](#) and Man, that [Jesus created the Universe](#), that there is a [heaven](#) or a [hell](#), that there is a real Devil, that [abortion](#) is wrong, that [homosexuality](#) is wrong, that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, that the gifts are for today, and that God does miracles. What is left?!

"To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work." (Titus 1:15-16)

Just last night on the news a youth pastor was arrested, from one of the mainline churches, for having sex with several of the youth group girls and videotaping them. This does not just happen in the mainline churches, but every church imaginable. Now we know why judgment will have to start at the

house of God! If these things are being found out, what else is happening in secret, that has not been discovered yet?!

Paul wrote Timothy about what it will be like in the end times, which we are in, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:1-5) These will be the 'spiritual leaders and church goers.' If you are in one of these churches, get out while you can or else you will end up like Lot!!!

James, the half brother of Jesus, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment." (James 3:1)

(31) *three years.* Two years and three months see v. 8 ... By Jewish reckoning, any part of a year is considered a year; so this period can be spoken of as three years.

(32) *"are sanctified.* Positional sanctification (see Acts 26:18).

(33-34) *"supplied my own needs. [these hands have provided for my necessities NKJV, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities KJV] Paul had worked in Thessalonica."*(1 Thessalonians 2:9) (*NIV Study Bible*)

"This is Paul's view of money and the ministry. Money was not his motivation (v.33). He supplemented his ministry by making tents (see 18:3), thereby putting less of a financial burden on the churches where he ministered" (v.34). (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(35) *"how he said.* This particular statement is not recorded in any of the four gospels, though it is certainly consistent with the teachings and actions of Christ (Luke 14:12). Probably Paul had learned of this statement directly by way of his contacts with Peter or one of the other apostles. In any case, its inclusion in Scripture marks it as divine truth and authority.

(36-38) *"Holy kiss: A kiss was a common greeting in the first century (see 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14).In western culture, the embrace seems to be the equivalent expression."* (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

In Mexico, I have seen believers kiss on both sides of the cheeks. In Japan maybe they bow. Each culture will dictate what is appropriate. We need to have a 'fervent love' for the brothers and sisters in the Church. A hand shake just does not always seem to be enough; at least hugs are nicer at times. When my wife's brother died suddenly, I remember Marlene and I hugged each other and cried on each other's neck. I believe this was the same type of thing the believers were doing for Paul, and him for them, expecting that they would not see each other again until they got to heaven. Oh, what a reunion we will have in heaven!!!

Chapter 21

(1-2) "*sailed straight to Cos*. Favorable winds took them to a stopping place for the night at this island. *Rhodes*. The leading city on the island of Rhodes, once noted for its harbor colossus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world (but demolished over two centuries before Paul arrived there). It took them a day to get to Rhodes. *Patara*. On the southern coast of Lycia. Paul changed ships from a vessel that hugged the shore of Asia Minor to one going directly to Tyre and Phoenicia.

(3) "*Cyprus*. See 13:4. *Tyre*. Paul had passed through this Phoenician area at least once before (15:3; cf. Mark 7:24).

(4-6) "*seven days*. These, added to the 29 days since the Passover in Philippi, would leave only two weeks until Pentecost." (*NIV Study Bible*)

When we come to this section there are those Christians that disagree on what happened here. It is hard for us when fine, well learned, equally trained men or women of God disagree on a particular passage. This is just one of those passages, so I want to give both views. Some say, Paul was in the center of God's will in going to Jerusalem even after being warned as to what would happen there. Others say, no, Paul was not in God's will, he should have listened and then he would not have been arrested. He was supposed to go to the Gentiles in Rome and forget the Jews in Jerusalem.

God had said that he would be a testimony to Gentiles, Kings as well as the children of Israel (Acts 9:15), through his arrest, this was fulfilled. God knew the decisions Paul would make, right or wrong, God knows all things. [See our [Christian World View](#)] He also got an expense paid trip to Rome. Now, you may think that is unspiritual in my assessment of what happened, but I do know that we tend to put the godly men and women of the Bible on pedestals [like little gods on the shelf].

True, they were great men and women of God, but none of them were perfect. They made mistakes and they sinned, the only person in the Bible who did not sin was Jesus. Even Mary, admonished Jesus wrongly by saying, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." Jesus corrected her gently by saying, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:48-50) There are other things I could mention, but the point is, no one is perfect in Scripture, except Christ. Even if there is no sin of that person mentioned, like Joseph, we still know Scripture reminds us in Romans 3:23 that, "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."

So here are the arguments 'pro' and 'con' for if Paul disobeyed the Lord by going to Jerusalem at this time: "Paul did not go to Jerusalem against the direction of the Spirit, as some have suggested, but because of the guidance of the Spirit. People pleaded with him not to go (21:4, 12), not because the Spirit prohibited his going, but because the Spirit revealed the capture that awaited him there (21:11-12)." (*NIV Study Bible*)

"Paul had already been warned that 'bonds and afflictions abide me' (Acts 2:23) if he persisted in returning to Jerusalem. At this point, however, it seems that the Holy Spirit, speaking through the Tyrian disciples, actually commanded him not to go. His 'heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel (was) that they might be saved' (Romans 10:1), and he earnestly desired to witness again to his former colleagues there in the very heart of Israel, perhaps hoping that by his bringing the Gentiles' gifts to the poor saints at Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-28), their hearts would be softened and they would turn to the Lord.

"He did intend then to go on to Rome and eventually to Spain, but insisted on first going back to Jerusalem. God had called him, however, to go to the Gentiles and it is hard to escape the conclusion that he was resisting the Holy Spirit at this point (Acts 21:10-13). Because his motives were good, God still allowed him to go to Rome, though as a prisoner.

"Whether he was truly following the leading of the Spirit in this decision (Acts 20:22), or resisting it, has long been debated. In either case, God still blessed and greatly used his ministry. Whether it would have been still greater if he had continued his primary mission to the Gentiles, there is no way to know." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

(3) "When they landed at Tyre, Paul had a bit of leisure, for seven days were required for the ship to unload its cargo. Disciples had come to Phoenicia as a result of the persecution following Stephen's death (11:19) [Paul had a part in this ironically.], and Paul now sought out the disciples in Tyre (RSV).

"In this church were prophets who disclosed through the Spirit that Paul faced serious dangers in Jerusalem. They therefore sought to dissuade him from his purpose. However, when Paul persisted, the entire church [notice wives and children were included in the group] accompanied him to his ship, and after prayer on the seashore, the evangelist and his party embarked." (*Wycliffe*)

"This passage [4-12] contains several warnings given by the Spirit that Paul would encounter trouble during his visit to Jerusalem (vv. 4, 10-12). But the apostle persisted (v.14), later being arrested and sent to Rome under guard.

"Arguments to whether or not Paul was in the perfect will of God are pointless. What is useful is to note 1) prophecies do not have to dictate the decisions or manipulate the will of a godly person, 2) even though they may be true, God's purpose may yet be realized, as was the case in God's will ultimately bringing Paul to Rome." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"Now there is a question whether the Holy Spirit was directly forbidding Paul to go to Jerusalem or whether the Holy Spirit was warning that Paul would be imprisoned and afflicted in Jerusalem. It is quite possible the Spirit told the disciples at Tyre concerning Paul's impending imprisonment, and they misinterpreted that warning as a message from the Holy Spirit that Paul should not go to Jerusalem. I guess we won't know until we talk to Paul." (*The Word For Today Bible* Chuck Smith)

We will probably not resolve this problem as to whether Paul was in the center of God's will here or not, this side of heaven. In reality, there are times in our own lives when we will not be sure if we made the right decision or not, God only knows. We do try to walk as close to the Lord as possible, walking in the Holy Spirit, but no one is perfect. When we get to heaven God will explain it all to us.

I like to think of the Christian life like an embroidery work, we are looking at the backside right now. We see some threads that make sense, and some that seem to go nowhere. God sees the other side and He will show us the beautiful picture it made, when we get to heaven. Until then, we need to trust Him and do our best to please Him!

(7) "*Ptolemais*. The modern city of Acco, north of and across the bay from Mount Carmel. It was one day's journey from Tyre on the north and another 35 miles to Caesarea on the south.

(8) "*Caesarea*. A Gentile city, the capital of Roman Judea (see note on 10:1) *Philip the evangelist*. Philip's evangelistic work may have focused on Caesarea for almost 25 years (see note on 8:40). "Evangelist" is a title used only here and in Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5." (*NIV Study Bible*)

This, of course, is not Philip one of the 12 Apostles, but the deacon appointed to serve the church in Jerusalem until persecution hit (Acts 6:1-6). He was also responsible for the evangelistic outreach and revival that took place in Samaria (8:1-8).

"Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied." This brings us to a question that was asked of us on our Interactive Bible Study, and here is how I answered it.

Question: What does the Bible say about [women preachers](#)?

There are examples in both the Old and New Testaments of women preachers (prophets). There are no examples, however, of women pastors in the New Testament. Let's look briefly at some of these wonderful women preachers in the Bible.

Why don't we start in the Old Testament and work our way to the New Testament. The first woman mentioned in Scripture as a prophetess is Miriam. You can look up the references on her: Exodus 2:4-10; 15:20-21; Numbers 12:1-15; 20:1; 26:59; 1 Chronicles 6:3; Micah 6:4.

"Miriam helped save her younger brother's life. He grew up to be the lawgiver, Moses. Miriam was a prophetess who sang praises to God when her brother successfully led their people out of Egyptian bondage and across the Red Sea. However, religious pride caused Miriam to join another brother, Aaron, in criticizing Moses. God struck Miriam with leprosy. She was healed upon Moses' prayer.

"We first hear of Miriam by name after Moses had led the Hebrews out of bondage and across the Red Sea. Aaron had acted as Moses' spokesman in Egypt. All three siblings had escaped ahead of Pharaoh's pursuing chariots. The Red Sea parted miraculously, and the Hebrews crossed safely over on the first leg of their journey toward the Promised Land.

"Miriam is introduced by name as 'the prophetess, Aaron's sister.' She took a timbrel (a kind of tambourine) and led the women in a dance." "Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them: 'Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!'" (Exodus 15:20-21)

"As a prophetess, she was the feminine equivalent of a divinely inspired foreteller, but more accurately 'one who speaks for another,' as the Hebrew word means.

"Miriam is the first prophetess mentioned in the Old Testament. She held a position of high spiritual leadership among her people. Less than half a dozen other prophetesses are mentioned by name in the Bible, although the New Testament indicates they were more numerous." (*Intimate portraits of WOMEN in the BIBLE* by Lee Roddy)

Other Old Testament prophetesses (preachers) that are mentioned are:

Judges 4:4-5:31 Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth

2 Kings 22:14-20 the prophetess, the wife of Shallum

2 Chronicles 34:22-28 Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum

Nehemiah 6:14 the prophetess Noadiah (false prophetess)

Isaiah 8:3 Isaiah's wife, she is not named but she is called 'the prophetess.' "Because a wife typically did not receive the honorary title of her husband's profession but was simply referred to as his wife (see 2 Kings 4:1), it should be assumed that Isaiah married a prophetess." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

New Testament prophetesses (preachers) you can study:

Anna Luke 2:36-38 "When Mary and Joseph brought the eight-day-old Jesus to the temple at Jerusalem to perform the requirements of the law, this prophetess approached the family. She gave thanks to God and spoke of Him to those who were looking for Jerusalem's redemption." (*Intimate portraits of WOMEN in the BIBLE* by Lee Roddy)

Elizabeth Luke 1:5-7, 13,24-25, 40-45, 56-80.

MARY, the mother of Jesus Matthew 1:18-25; 2:11-23; 13:55; Mark 3:31; 6:3; Luke 1:26-56; 2:5-19, 22-51; 8:19-21; John 2:1-12; 19:25-27; Acts 1:14.

Philip the evangelist's daughters were prophetesses. "Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied Acts 21:9.

Jezebel Revelation 2:20 She was a false prophet, but she liked to call herself a prophetess. "Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."

I think the best way I can end this study would be to quote what God says about women preachers (not pastors or elders, but preachers). Peter preaching after the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost says: "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy.'" (Acts 2:16-18) ([Interactive Bible Discussion Page](#), Bible-Christian.org)

"This reference to Philip's daughters' each exercising the gifts of prophecy makes clear that women did bring God's word by the power of the Holy Spirit and that such ministry was fully accepted in the early church.

"This is reinforced by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:5, where he directs 1) that a woman may 'prophesy,' but 2) that she must be properly 'covered,' that is, rightly related to her husband or other spiritual authority, a regulation incumbent upon all spiritual leaders-male or female (see 1 Timothy 3:1-13).

"It is puzzling why the place of women in ministry is contested by some in the church. Women had an equal place in the Upper Room, awaiting the Holy Spirit's coming and the birth of the church (Acts 1:14). Then Peter's prophetic sermon at Pentecost affirmed the Old Testament promise was now to be realized: 'your daughters' and 'maidservants' would now share fully and equally with men in realizing the anointing, fullness, and ministry of the Holy Spirit, making them effective in witness and service for the spread of the gospel.

"Though the place of men seems more pronounced in the number who filled leadership offices, there does not appear to be any direct restriction of privilege. Note: 1) the direct mention of Phoebe as a deacon ('servant,' Greek *diakonia*, Romans 16:1). 2) John's letter to an 'elect [chosen] lady' with instructions concerning whom she allows to minister in her 'house' (a designation for early church fellowships, 2 John); and 3) 1 Corinthians 1:11 and Philippians 4:2, where Chloe and Euodia seem to be women in whose homes believers gather. The method of designation suggests they were the appointed leaders in their respective fellowships.

"The acceptance of women in a public place of ministry in the church is not a concession to the spirit of the feminist movement. But the refusal of such a place might be a concession to an order of male chauvinism, unwarranted by and unsupported in the Scriptures. Clearly, women did speak-preach and prophesy in the early church (see 1 Timothy 2:8-15)." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

Some Christians have questions about women speaking in church because of what is said in 1 Timothy 2:13. I believe this is speaking to the issue of women taking leadership over men. "Positively, Paul exhorts women to be disciples and to maintain a conduct that would not discredit the church. The prohibition of v. 12 refers to the authoritative office of apostolic teacher in the church. It does not forbid women to educate, proclaim truth, or exhort (prophesy). See Acts 2:17; 18:26; 21; 1 Corinthians 11:5; Philippians 4:3; 2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15; Titus 2:3-5." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

Then another passage that gives Christians problems in the area of women preachers are these two verses in 1 Corinthians 14:34-35. "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says."

First off, Paul has already spoken about women prophesying in the church and rules regulating this, so he cannot mean that they are never to speak at all in church. "Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head." (1 Corinthians 11:4-5a)

So there is another reason Paul is bringing this up, and it is something that happens when the men are sitting on one side and the women on another, as it is in some cultures. They were shouting across the aisle, asking their husbands questions disturbing the whole service. Paul says, in so many words, the women need to be respectful and not speak out loud while the Word is being proclaimed, and ask your questions of your husband at home.

"In this context Paul is discussing primarily the disruption of worship by women who become involved in noisy discussions surrounding tongues speaking and prophecy. Instead of publicly clamoring for explanations, the wives were to discuss matters with their husbands at home (cf. v. 35). Paul does not forbid women to speak in church (see 11:5). What he is forbidding is the disorderly speaking indicated in these verses." (*NIV Study Bible*)

(10-14) Personal Prophecy. "The Bible clearly allows for personal prophecy. Nathan brought David a confrontive 'word' from God (2 Samuel 2:13); Isaiah predicted Hezekiah's death (Isaiah 38:1); and in this text Agabus told Paul he faced trouble in Jerusalem. "Personal prophecy' refers to a prophecy ('word') the Holy Spirit may prompt one person to give another, relating to personal matters.

"Many feel deep reservations about this operation of the gift of prophecy because sometimes it is abused. True 'words' may be used to manipulate others, or they may be unwisely or hastily applied. This passage reveals safeguards against abusive uses of personal prophecy, allowing us to implement this biblical practice.

"First, the 'word' will usually not be new to the mind of the person addressed, but it will confirm something God is already dealing with him [or her] about. From Acts 20:22-24 we know Paul was already sensitive to the issue Agabus raised.

"Second, the character of the person bringing the 'word' ought to be weighed. Agabus's credibility is related not to his claim of having a 'word,' but to his record as a trustworthy man of God used in the exercise of this gift (11:28; 21:10).

"Third, remember that the prophecy, or 'word,' is not to be considered 'controlling.' In other words, such prophecies should never be perceived as dominating anyone's free will. Christian living is never cultish-governed by omens or the counsel of gurus. Paul did not change his plans because of Agabus's prophecy or because of the urging of others (vv. 12-14); he received the 'word' graciously but continued his plans nonetheless.

"Fourth, all prophecy is 'in part' (1 Corinthians 13:9), which means that as true as that 'part' may be, it does not give the whole picture. Agabus's 'word' was true, and Paul was bound in Jerusalem. But this also occasioned an opportunity to eventually minister in Rome (Acts 23:11).

"Finally, in the light of a 'word,' we should prayerfully consider the word as Mary did the shepherds' report (Luke 2:19).*(New Spirit Filled Life Bible)* The Lord gave me a personal 'word' many years ago, as a person prophesied over me. I had forgotten it, so it was not as if I tried to fulfill it. After we had been doing the Christian websites for several years, that are accessed in many countries of the world, Marlene reminded me that it was prophesied over me that God had given me wisdom, and that my name would be known around the world. When she reminded me of this it was a real encouragement to us to continue the work God had given. God knows the future, we just need to trust Him!

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