Missions – Acts and Onward

Week 8 – Heading to Jerusalem

I. Preparing leaders and Setting Expectations

1. Paul does some traveling after the Craftsman riot

A. He heads back and forth providing support and encouragement to different churches.

† **Acts 20:1-2** – *And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.[2] And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,* ***PTQ***

i. **"Prominence of Persons:** God's plan features persons, 110 of which are named in Acts."[1] **PTQ**

† **Acts 20:4-5 –** *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. These going before tarried for us at Troas.*

B. Paul does this through times of fellowship, preaching, and proclaiming the great works of God.

† **Acts 20:7-11 –** *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.[8] And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.[9]* ***And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.****[10] And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.[11] When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.* ***PTQ***

i. During this time is when the story of Eutychus comes from.

ii. Thus again reiterating the connections between Peter and Paul by the raising of one from the dead, showing legitimacy to Paul's work among the Gentiles.

iii. My youth pastor growing up helped me remember Eutychus name by noting you'd a cussed too if you fell out of a window.

2. Paul after going back and forth gets to Miletus and requests the churchman of Asia and more particularly Ephesus to come get his final marching orders for them.

† **Acts 20:16** – *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.* ***PTQ***

A. Paul's commands to these elders begin with reminding them of his example.

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[1] Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 112.

† **Acts 20:18-21 –** *And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,[19] Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:[20] And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,[21] Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

i. this speech is specifically meant for church leaders. They are firsthand witnesses and can testify to the truth of what he says about his ministry with them. The speech is not Paul's defense against critics but an exhortation for others to emulate him[2]

ii. In the narrative, Paul has spoken "publicly" in city centers, lecture halls, and governor's residences. "House to house" means not that he went door to door but that he spoke in the household rooms where the churches assembled (1 Cor. 16:19)[3] **PTQ**

B. Paul gives a particular charge to them

† **Acts 20:26-28 –** *Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.[27] For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.[28]* ***Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God****, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* **PTQ**

C. Paul gives warnings about the future

† **Acts 20:29-36 –** *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.[30] Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.[31] Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.[32] And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.[33] I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.[34] Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.[35] I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.[36] And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.* ***PTQ***

II. Following God's will even when others are sad to be without you.

1. Paul was purposed in his Spirit to go down to Jerusalem.

† **Acts 19:21 –** *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit,when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.*

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[2] David E. Garland, *Acts*, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2017), 210.

[3] Garland, *Acts*, 211.

- The Term purposed there comes from a Greek word normally translated as lay, or put in other words this desire to go to Jerusalem was put upon him.

A. Yet it also seems as though the Spirit was warning Paul against going.

i. Two ideas have been put forth here the one is that Paul was acting under the inspiration of God and the other is that Paul had moved into his own plans instead of God's. **PTQ**

† **Acts 21:4-5 –** *And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.[5] And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.*

ii. I tend to lean towards the idea that Paul was accomplishing God's will instead of opposing it.

† **Acts 20:22-25 –** *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:[23] Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.[24] But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.[25] And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.*

† **Acts 20:37-38** – *And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,[38] Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.*

iii. As Paul found his way across Paul went from potentially being warned not to go to being told aspects of what would happened when he went.

† **Acts 21:10-14 –** *And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.[11] And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.[12] And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.[13] Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.[14] And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.*

2. As Christians sometimes what God seems to press upon us will not be what those around us desire to hear.

A. Men today much like Paul dealt with have decided to go knowing there would be danger, difficulties, and sadness in tow.

i. One minor example would be Eric Woodworth, or Braydon Teach both of which we mourned leaving but were grateful of there immense desire to be used by God how they felt God moving them.

ii. A Clearer example would likely be the person of Jim Elliot.

III. Paul's difficulties with the Jews

1. Paul's initial reception

† **Acts 21:18-20 -** *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present[19] And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry[20] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:* ***PTQ***

2. The problem of Paul in the people's eyes

† **Acts 21:21 -** *And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.* ***PTQ***

3. The attempted fix

A. Paul was told to connect himself with Jews who were taking Jewish vows

† **Acts 21:*23-25* –** *Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;[24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.[25] As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.*

B. Paul upon doing so found the Jews of Asia being the one's who riled the city up against him.

† ***Acts*** **21:27-29 –** *And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,[28] Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.[29] (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)* ***PTQ***

4. Paul arrested or protected

† **Acts 21:33-34 –** Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.[34] And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

† **Acts 21:37-39 –** *And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?[38] Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?[39] But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.*

5. Understanding the difficulties that came to Paul from his own people Christian can identify difficulties in the modern church coming from even other Christians.

A. "Newbigin says that it was never Allen's intention to convince missionaries of the rightness of this or that "method" but, rather, to urge "*the resubmission in each generation of the traditions of men to the Word and Spirit of God."*[4]

B. *Rampant colonialism and the Westernization of mission principles and practice*[5]

C. *Encroaching liberalism/modernism and the Westernization of mission theology and doctrine.* [6]

D. *Recent proposals needful of submission by today's evangelicals.* [7] **PTQ**

i. *Evangelicals and Catholics Together - As the price of togetherness and unity, proponents of this movement sometimes reinterpret Pauline doctrines such as sola scriptura, sola fide, and sola gratia, or equate the imputation of righteousness with the impartation of righteousness; or blend the "sacrifice of the Mass" with the "ordinance of the Lord's Supper." Concessions such as these are often attributed to the unifying work of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit does not work independently of the Spirit-inspired Word of God. Therefore, proposals such as these should be submitted and resubmitted to examination in the light of history and Scripture.*[8]

ii. *New Perspectives on Paul - Fundamental to much of the thinking of this particular movement is a recasting of Rabbinic Judaism as it existed from ca. 200 B.C. to ca. A.D. 200. Replacing the traditional view is a new understanding of post-Second Temple Judaism as being a religion of grateful response to God for Israel's covenant relationship with him. Sometimes called "covenantal nomism," this teaching is held to be the kind of religion known by Jesus and, most likely, by Paul as well. Its net effect can be rejection of the traditional Reformed understanding of Paul's teachings concerning the false gospel of Judaizers, justification by faith alone and the full authority of Scripture. It deserves attention of the missions community lest the missionary message inherited from the apostle Paul and reclaimed by Protestant Reformers be modified or even lost.*[9]

iii. *The Emergent Church – A major leader of the Emergent Church defines "missional" as connoting that believers should first determine what the mission is and then construct a theology that supports it. Some scholars consider the Emergent Church movement to be receding, at least in evangelical churches and missions. However, the idea that missionary vision*

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[4] David J. Hesselgrave, "Paul's Missions Strategy," in *Paul's Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 129.

[5] David J. Hesselgrave, "Paul's Missions Strategy, 131.

[6] Ibid., 132.

[7] Hesselgrave, "Paul's Missions Strategy," 139-140.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 140.

precedes and even determines missionary theology is still very much with us. To the extent that it is, it threatens the very foundation of biblical mission by making the knowledge of God—which is what theology is and must be—subservient to a presumed knowledge of mission. That turns both theology and missiology on their head.[10]

iv. *Supersessionism and "replacement theology."* – Supersessionism is a form of covenant theology holding that God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12 are ultimately "spiritual promises" to be fulfilled in the Church of Christ as one body—multiethnic, multinational, multicultural and multigenerational. Personally, I think of extreme forms of supersessionism as being the theological counterpart of the kind of ultradispensationalism that teaches that only the Pauline epistles (and not necessarily all of them) are directly applicable to the church in this dispensation of grace. "Ultrasupersessionism" (my word) holds to the position that ethnic Israel has no place in the economy of God today in spite of Paul's teaching to the effect that Israel's "partial hardening" is temporary until the "fullness of the Gentiles" is fulfilled, after which the "Deliverer" will come from Zion and fulfill God's covenant with Israel.[11]

v. *Revisionist holism - At one end of the missiological spectrum "holistic mission" holds that evangelism and sociopolitical action are more or less equal partners in mission. At the other end of the spectrum, the "dichotomy between material and spiritual, between evangelism and social action, between loving God and loving neighbor" is rejected. Doing good deeds in Jesus' name is evangelism. The "degree of partnership" involved here is important, but what is all-important is priority. The Christian mission is world evangelization. Doing good deeds is indeed Christian, but that does not make doing good deeds Christian mission. Making disciples is prioritistic—God decides exactly what is to be done and how to do it. That makes for clarity in mission. Doing good sociopolitical deeds is holistic—the people involved more or less decide all that is to be done and how to go about it. That makes for confusion.*[12]

Conclusion: The Christian church in Paul's day got hung up on minor details and dropped the mission, while today many have done the same. It is vital that the Christians go back to the Scripture, make sure to keep the main thing, and continue to preach the Gospel on a regular basis, regardless of the cost. **PTQ**

[10] Hesselgrave, "Paul's Missions Strategy," 140.

[11] Ibid., 140–41.

[12] Ibid., 141–42.

Roman Procurators of Palestine, AD 44–66	
	AD
Fadus	44–46
Tiberius Alexander	46–48
Cumanus	48–52
Felix (Acts 23:24–24:27)	52–60
Festus (Acts 24:27–25:27)	60–62
Albinus	62–64
Gessius Florus	64–66[1]



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[13] Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, Fourth Edition, Encountering Biblical Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022), 230.