

Third Apostolic Journey Part 2**Acts 20:1–38**

Paul's third apostolic journey began, as usual, at Antioch. He traveled through the southern region of Galatia (Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) and probably through Antioch of Pisidia. He then entered the southern area of the region of Asia and stopped in Ephesus for as long as three years. During that time he gave the Holy Spirit to 12 Kingdom believers who were not familiar with the Holy Spirit, and was kicked out of the synagogue and relocated his ministry at the school of Tyrannus. From there the word of God was spread throughout Asia. He was proving himself to be a man sent from God by the many extraordinary miracles that were happening through him.

Toward the end of his ministry at Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus west into the region of Macedonia. Before leaving, the craftsmen who were making silver idols to Artemus were seeing a great decrease in business because people were turning to the true God. They caused a great uproar by stirring up the people against believers called the "Way."

Greece (verses 1–6)

Following his stay in Ephesus Paul makes his way to Macedonia, most likely visiting the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He was able to give them much exhortation (admonishment, encouragement and instruction). Following that, he traveled south to Greece and most likely visited the church at Corinth. He was in that area for three months until the unbelieving Jews plotted against him. Because of this, instead of sailing to Syria he traveled back north into Macedonia. Traveling with him were Sopater (from Berea), Aristarchus and Secundus (both from Thessalonica), and Gaius (from Derbe), Timothy (from Lystra), Tychicus and Trophimus (both from Ephesus).

Many of those traveling with Paul were with him to the end. Many believe that Sopater is mentioned in Romans 16:21 as being a kinsman of Paul. Aristarchus and Gaius were dragged into the theater by the Ephesian mob in Acts 19:29. Aristarchus sailed with Paul from Caesarea to Myra in Lycia on the southern shore of modern-day Turkey as Paul was being transported to Rome (Acts 27:2). Aristarchus is described as Paul's fellow prisoner and fellow laborer in Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 1:24 respectively.

Gaius was another faithful companion who was apparently saved under Paul's ministry in Corinth. Paul had water baptized Gaius but later stated that he was glad he only baptized very few people since he didn't come to baptized (1 Corinthians 1:14–17). He is also mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans (Romans 16:23). This may be the same Gaius mentioned by John in 3 John 1, although I personally believe the Gaius John is writing to was a Kingdom believer saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom.

Tychicus was another one of Paul's faithful ministers who was also much beloved by Paul (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7). Toward the end of his life, Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus, apparently as an encouragement to the believers there (2 Timothy 4:12). Trophimus came from the same area as Tychicus. While in Jerusalem with Paul, he was accused of coming into the part of the temple which was restricted to only Jews. Paul was falsely imprisoned for supposedly bringing him there (Acts 21:29). Toward the end of Paul's life, Trophimus became too sick to travel and had to stay in Miletus, a city on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey. It would appear from this that he was traveling with Paul after Paul was released from Roman imprisonment. This would have happened after the events recorded in the book of Acts.

Troas (verses 7–16)

Although Luke is not mentioned by name, we can assume that he is with Paul as he travels through Macedonian and into the city of Philippi (notice the “we” of verse 6). The rest of the group traveling with Paul continued on to Troas and waited for him to catch up. Paul had decided he was going to stay in Philippi until after the days of Unleavened Bread. Jews were required to travel to Jerusalem to observe this eight-day feast of Passover, so he was not staying there to observe the feast. It took five days for Paul and Luke to travel from Philippi to Troas. He was in Troas with his fellow-laborers for a total of seven days before moving on.

On his last day at Troas, on the first day of the week, Paul was preaching to them for a long time. A young man named Eutychus fell asleep and fell out of a third story window and had died. Paul, almost casually, raised him up from the dead and he fellowshiped with them for the rest of the night.

His traveling companions took a ship from Troas to Assos while Paul decided to walk the 20 miles to Assos and meet up with them there. From Assos, they sailed 40 miles southeast to Mitylene. It was Paul’s desire to be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost and so he skipped going into the region of Asia and the city of Ephesus by sailing down the western coast of modern-day Turkey to Patara and then on to Jerusalem.

While stopping in Miletus, he sent word to the elders of the church at Ephesus to come and visit with him. Ephesus was about 60 miles away from Miletus. Again, Miletus is where Paul left Trophimus because he was too sick to travel with Paul (2 Timothy 4:20).

Meeting with the elders of Ephesus (verses 17–38)

Paul’s meeting with the elders of the church at Ephesus was a somewhat sad one. Paul first summarized his ministry with them reminding them of the great struggles he went through to bring them the Gospel of Grace. In spite of the many struggles, he was faithful in testifying to both Jews and Gentiles faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul that he was going to experience bonds and afflictions in every city, indicating that he should expect the same as he now travels to Jerusalem. He was expecting to finish his course and the ministry of proclaiming the gospel that was given to him by the Lord. This was going to be the last time that he will see these people.

He would no longer be able to warn them of the dangers that they were to experience. As elders of the church, they were admonished to be vigilant in protecting the flock from bad doctrine. It was revealed to him that savage wolves would come into the congregation and tear them apart. The doctrine they needed to hang on to would be at stake and people would begin to turn away from the sound teaching given to them by Paul. False doctrine would come into the church and people would be drawn to these false teachers.

All believers need to understand that we need to hang on to the sound words given to us by Jesus Christ through the apostle Paul. Much of his ministry was spent imploring believers to retain the sound words of his teachings. It is truly sad that so many today do not understand how important Paul’s doctrine is for spiritual growth and living. Paul’s 13 books give members of the Body of Christ specific instructions for spiritual living that can be found nowhere else. Those who don’t follow Paul’s instructions are building up wood, hay, and stubble (1 Corinthians 3:10–15). Believers need to treat Paul as our God-given master builder of the church.

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