

"The Third Missionary Journey"**Part 9****Acts 18:23-21:26**

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we followed Paul as he departed from Ephesus on his way to Macedonia. We also considered the three journeys that Paul made to Corinth. He went there on his second missionary journey, he made a quick journey to Corinth from Ephesus during his three-year stay at Ephesus, and then he would go to Corinth during this third missionary journey. On this journey, Paul would come to Corinth to collect money for the Jews in Jerusalem, and he would stay in Greece for three months. He then desired to depart and sail back to Syria, where he had started from. But there were Jews who were waiting for him to get on the ship, and their plan was to kill him and probably take the money. God somehow revealed this to Paul and he therefore made the choice to go back through Macedonia. It is believed that this backtrack led Paul to another area.

Romans 15:19

¹⁹ Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

There is no mention elsewhere of Paul going to Illyricum. It is believed that because of the Jews plot to kill Paul on the third missionary journey Paul then visited Illyricum which was a little west of Macedonia. The plot of the Jews to kill Paul led to another group of people hearing the Gospel.

➤ **Returning to Jerusalem**

Notice Acts 20:4

Paul had a group of 7 men here that were traveling with him. As these men traveled with Paul there were two points being accomplished.

1. **These men would be men who testified of the integrity of Paul.** Let us keep in mind Paul has in his possession the finances that were gathered from the churches for the saints at Jerusalem. Paul was very careful never to give his critics or anyone else the opportunity

to bring an accusation against him nor did he ever do anything that would hinder the Gospel. He was willing to sacrifice all of his rights in order to see that the Gospel had open paths to the hearts of his listeners.

1 Corinthians 9:9-12

⁹ *For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?*

¹⁰ *Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.*

¹¹ *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?*

¹² *If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; **but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.***

Paul would travel with this group of men to also not give an opportunity for the enemy to bring an accusation against him.

2. He traveled with these men to disciple them. Paul was always looking to teach the younger believers that were around him. I am sure as they traveled Paul continuously taught them what he had been given from the Lord. Think about some of what they heard from Paul.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-15

¹³ *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

¹⁵ **For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord,** *that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

They would have heard about the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the Kingdom as well as much more. Paul was making disciples as they traveled.

Application:

Both of these points are easily applied to our lives. First of all, we are to be people that are always watching to protect our testimony. We must never allow ourselves to get into situations where the enemy can bring accusations against us.

1 Peter 2:11-12

¹¹ *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

¹² *Having your conversation (lifestyle) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.*

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

Second, we should always be looking to talk about the things of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:6-12

⁶ *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:*

⁷ *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

⁸ *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.*

⁹ *And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

¹⁰ *And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,*

¹¹ *And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;*

¹² *Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

Notice Acts 20:5-6

Paul and his company had now arrived back at Troas. It would be here that Paul would preach to many.

Notice Acts 20:7

Here is the first mention of the church meeting on the first day of the week. They met on the first day of the week because this was when our Lord was resurrected. The church is not required to worship on the Sabbath/Saturday. There are many churches today who do worship on the Sabbath and they claim that it is a sin not to. Let us notice a few points concerning the church.

- 1. The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant, we who are Christians are under the New Covenant.*
- 2. There is no New Testament command to keep the Sabbath.*
- 3. The first command to keep the Sabbath was not until the time of Moses.*
- 4. The Jerusalem Council did not order Gentile believers to keep the Sabbath.*

Acts 15:28-29

²⁸ *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;*

²⁹ *That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.*

5. *Paul never cautioned Christians about breaking the Sabbath.*

6. *The New Testament clearly teaches that Sabbath keeping was not a requirement.*

Paul did go into the synagogues on the Sabbath and that was because that is when the Jews met and he desired to preach the Gospel to them. As more and more Jewish opposition arose teaching in the synagogues on the Sabbath became a practice of the past.

Notice Acts 20:7 again.

These believers came together to have a meal, remember the Lord, and to hear Paul preach. In this passage we will see that Paul preached all night long. This service did not start until the evening because these people would work during the day. They met on the first day of the week in the evening. In this situation, Paul was leaving the next day and there were many things that he desired to say.

Notice Acts 20:7-11

Here we see that this young man fell and was killed. Paul then raised him back to life and then went directly back to teaching the Word until the break of day and then Paul and the others departed. This is a wonderful miracle but the Bible gives very little time to it. Why is there not more said?

The reason there is little space given to this miracle is because God desires for us to know that miracles do not build disciples. But the Word of God builds disciples. That is why Paul went right back to teaching after he raised this man from the dead. Miracles were often explained away in Paul's day, but the Word of God was living and it was the power of God unto the Jew and the Gentile. Now there were occasions when miracles were used to move entire cities such as Ephesus. But there were times when miracles had no impact.

Luke 16:27-31

²⁷ *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

²⁸ *For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

²⁹ *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

³⁰ *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*

³¹ *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

Getting back to Acts, if miracles did not have much impact upon the people, then why did God permit Paul to perform this resurrection? When we get into our study of Galatians, we shall look closer at this question, but for now we can consider a quick answer. After Paul would depart many of these churches the Judaizers would come right behind him. One of the attacks that they would often use was an attack against Paul himself. They were much like modern day politicians in that they could not dispute the message he was proclaiming so they therefore went to attacking his person. They did this by attacking his Apostleship. Because he was not one of the original Apostles but was called to be an Apostle on the Damascus Road, the Judaizers declared he was not really an Apostle. The miracles that he performed proved that he was truly an Apostle.

Acts 5:11-12

¹¹ *And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

¹² *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people;*

Conclusion:

God knew what the attacks would be against Paul and God made provision to defend his Apostleship.

Application:

Let us know that what we often go through in this life is to prepare us for something that we will later face. God knows our lives from the beginning to the end and He knows what we will face tomorrow, next week and even next year. He is always faithful to prepare us for what is coming. It is God's desire to see spiritual growth in our lives and for that reason He will often take us through the iron furnace to burn away the dross that has collected. Is it easy to go through the furnace? NO! But it is needful for our growth and that is what is important.