

ACTS 20

The internet was created in the 1960's but mainly for military and research use. Sometime after it was created a man (whose name is unimportant) created "email" as a way for people to communicate with each other. By the 70's and 80's there were more email systems, but it was during the 90's that popular email services were created.

Email radically transformed the way we communicated; The biggest feature was "speed". So much so that the term "snail-mail" became a tag-name for postal mail. But consider also the potentially immediate two-way communication; Imagine if Paul wrote an email epistle to a church who didn't quite understand what he meant. They could respond right away, and Paul could quickly clarify what he meant.

Obviously, before electronic email, letters took a long time to reach the intended recipients. I often thought how tragic it would be to receive a letter from a friend or relative several months after someone was seriously ill, or hurt or had died. Our grief would be compounded by the fact that our loved one would be long buried before we even heard of it.

In this chapter of Acts we will see some of the emotion that welled up when Paul left one place to go to another; This was near the end of his third missionary journey and there is a sense (and sometimes it was even stated) that he most likely would not return to his spiritual children with whom he had shared the Gospel as well as Godly wisdom and understanding about the One they served.

The heart that once tried to destroy the Way, a heart that would not allow him to even talk with a Gentile was transformed into a heart that cherished and loved those to whom his LORD and Messiah sent.

[Galatians 4:19](#) My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you,

[1 Thessalonians 2:7](#) But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children.

Also note that he wrote (or will shortly write) 4 more letters to the churches he planted:

- 56 AD The Book of Galatians is Written from Corinth
- 57 AD The Book of 1 Corinthians is Written from Macedonia
- 57 AD The Book of 2 Corinthians is Written from Macedonia
- 58 AD The Book of Romans is Written from Corinth

Much was invested in the ones he loved! But much still needed to be poured out to fulfill his work for his Master.

PRAY

I want to remind you of where we left off so that we can get our bearings straight for what is happening in

The Riot in Ephesus

Acts 19:23-28 And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. (24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. (25) He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. (26) Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands. (27) So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship." (28) Now when they heard *this*, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

Remember that Paul's disciples and some of his friends kept him from going to the theater to proclaim the truth against the lies of the tradesmen who were only really concerned with their livelihood rather than the reputation of their so-called goddess.

(20:1) After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself*, embraced *them*, and departed to go to Macedonia.

Acts 19:21 When these things were accomplished, Paul **purposed in the Spirit**, when he had passed through **(to go to)** Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Paul was led by the Holy Spirit to go to Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece (Athens). He wanted to visit the churches there to continue to teach, strengthen and encourage them in the LORD. He also took up a collection for the saints in Jerusalem who were struggling financially.

The scene is emotionally charged. He was traveling far away and might not be able to see them again.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. (9) Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, (10) who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us*, (11) you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift *granted* to us through many.

It was during his time in Macedonia that Paul wrote the 2 letter to the Corinthians. In that letter he promised to come again and...

(Acts 20:2) Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece

Whether he went back to Athens is not known but given the earlier events there, it is most likely that we went to the church at Corinth as he promised (2 Cor 12:14 and 13:1)

(Acts 20:3) and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

Paul wanted to return to Antioch by boat but he had heard of a plot to kill him. And, since he and his companions were carrying a lot of money, they decided to go back over a land route back through Macedonia. Imagine their surprise and joy of seeing their dear friend and pastor again!

(Acts 20:4) And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. (5) These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas. (6) But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Some stricter commentators believe that Paul did not celebrate the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread because Christians are not required to observe these OT feasts. But it is narrow-minded to think that Paul would not observe the Feast – not out of legalistic requirements but it was part of who he was; He could celebrate the Feast with an eye on Jesus, the One who fulfilled the Feast as the Sacrificed Lamb of God!

(Acts 20:7) Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. (8) There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

We know that the “first day of the week” is Sunday. Luke reckons time as the Jews do: The day starts after sundown, therefore it was Saturday night after the Sabbath when Paul and the church met. But why so late? The Jewish Christians may have been keeping the Sabbath and were waiting for it to end; there may have been Greek workers and even bond-servants who could not stop working until after dark. Regardless, Paul’s teaching began at sundown and went on to midnight; Luke is setting the scene: Many men and women; oil lamps burning; there in an upper room and it’s hot and smoky.

Side-note: the breaking of bread is considered by many to be communion.

(Acts 20:9) And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

And then it happens! A young man, sitting in an opening of a window falls sleep and falls 3 stories down to his death.

Now, ironies of ironies: the name Eutychus means “lucky one”.

(Acts 20:10) But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing *him* said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him."

Paul rushes down and falls upon him and the LORD grants Paul the gifts of miracles and raising the dead!

1 Kings 17:17-24 Now it happened after these things *that* the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so serious that there was no breath left in him. (18) So she said to Elijah, "What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?" (19) And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. (20) Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" (21) And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." (22) Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived. (23) And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!" (24) Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this I know that you *are* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* the truth."

A similar miracle was recorded in 2 Kings 4:18 when the LORD, thru the prophet Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman.

Also, Peter raised a young girl named Tabitha (Acts 9:36-41) and, of course, Jesus raised

- *The widow of Nain's son* ([Luke 7:11-17](#)).
- *Jairus' daughter* ([Luke 8:52-56](#)).
- *Lazarus of Bethany* ([John 11](#)).

(Acts 20:11) Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, **he departed**.

Afterwards, they came back and ate a meal (this "had broken bread" is a regular meal and not communion)

And after a long night of prayer, teaching, fellowship and one really cool miracle, Paul departs from Troas.

(Acts 20:12) And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

The young man returns and everyone is joyous and comforted by the Gospel truths taught by Paul!

(Acts 20:13) Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.

Notice first that the pronoun changes from "they" to "we". Luke is including himself in the narrative and a "first-person" eye-witness.

Paul decides to go on foot; it's about a thirty mile walk. Why he does this is not recorded. Perhaps, like Jesus, he needed time alone to be with his LORD. A lot has happened to Paul and he traveled great distances; there were many threats on his life and much persecution; communing with Jesus was what

he needed to face those things that lay ahead of him;

(Acts 20:14) And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to **Mitylene**. (15) We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite **Chios**. The following *day* we arrived at **Samos** and stayed at **Trogyllium**. The next *day* we came to **Miletus**. (16) For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

Paul and friends travel along the coast of Asia Minor; sometimes stopping, sometimes just continuing along their way; Paul was trying to get to Jerusalem for the Feast of Shavuot, a.k.a., the Feast of Weeks, a.k.a. Pentecost. Because of this, they sailed past Ephesus into Miletus.

By the way, it has been estimated that this, Paul's 3rd Missionary journey, was approximately 4 years long; It also has been estimated that Paul and his companions traveled around 1,190 by sea, and 1,325 by land (or 2515+- miles in total). Just reading the narrative gives us the impression of a short amount of time. But it took days, weeks and even months to travel from place to place. Even though the major roads were considered relatively safe because of the Roman soldiers, Paul's travels were fraught with dangers because of both Jewish and pagan opposition.

So, from place to place Paul's immediate circumstances were not generally known; He did, however, send some of his disciples to the churches that they had established to know how they were doing and to give a report of how Paul was doing....but again...this took time.

I can only imagine a little of how they must have felt. I have a daughter, son-in-law and 2 grandson's in England and of course, my son in Jerusalem. I can keep in touch by phone, email, WhatsApp, facetime and other electronic means, but, as much as these are a great way to keep in touch, there's nothing that compares to actual face-to-face communication where we