

The Journey Begins

Lesson 1

Acts 20:1-12

Background

Dr. Luke, the author of the book of Acts, wrote to Theophilus (Luke 1:1-3 and Acts 1:1, 2) and a Gentile audience for the purpose of giving an accurate account of how the Gospel spread (Acts 1:8) from Jerusalem, the birth place of the church at Pentecost, (Acts 2) to the ends of the earth, which was Rome. (Acts 28) In an effort to move this story forward, Luke did not record every event; so when we come to a passage such as Acts 20:1-6 that appears to take place over a short period of time, history tells us that this period was between 18 months and two years.

In late fall of A.D. 56, Paul left Ephesus and went to Greece (Corinth) where he spent the winter months. (Acts 20:3) During that time he wrote a letter to the church at Rome saying that he planned to visit with them on his way to Spain. (Romans 15:24) But, before he could visit, he must return to Jerusalem with the contributions from the Gentile Believers for the poor saints in Jerusalem. (Romans 15:25) Paul asked the Romans to *"join me in my struggle by praying to God for me,"* then gave three specific prayer requests:

- 1) That he would be rescued from the unbelieving Jews in Judea
- 2) That the gift he was bringing would be acceptable; and
- 3) That by God's will, he could visit them soon. (Romans 15:30-32)

With the visit to Jerusalem, Paul's third missionary journey which had begun at Antioch, Syria in A.D. 53 would come to a conclusion. (Acts 18:23)

The story picks up in the spring of A.D. 57 with Paul and his companions ready to leave Corinth for Jerusalem.

Travel Plans – Acts 20:1-6

1. Paul had planned on sailing from Corinth (the seaport of Cenchrea). Using Acts 20:3:
 - What caused him to change those plans?
 - What did he do instead?
2. Paul would be accompanied by several men who were representatives from the churches he had established on his journeys. Make a list of the men and the cities they represented. (Acts 20:4)

3. These men were carrying their church love gifts for the poor saints in Jerusalem. How did Paul's change in travel plans affect them? (Acts 20:5)
4. Eventually Paul did set sail. Using Acts 20:6:
 - What city did Paul sail from?
 - What holiday did Paul mention as a reference point?
 - How long did the trip take before Paul met up with the others?
5. Notice the text change from "they" to "we." "We" sailed and arrived at Troas where "we" stayed. (Acts 20:6) This detail is important because it lets the reader know that the author, Dr. Luke, has rejoined the team. The last recorded time that Luke was with Paul was in Acts 16. In what city did the "we" passages end? (Acts 16:10-12)

Troas - Acts 20:7-12

6. Once in Troas, preparation for the trip to Jerusalem took seven days. Luke records one particular event that took place in Troas. What background information does he give for this important story? (Acts 20:7, 8)
7. Using Acts 20:9, 10, what information did Luke give about:
 - Eutychus?
 - Paul?

8. How did this surprising turn of events affect the rest of Paul's visit in Troas? (Acts 20:11)

9. What final word did Luke record about Eutychus and his family? (Acts 20:12)

Reflect:

10. Try to imagine what it was like to be in the room that evening. What do you think your response would have been to the events, and afterwards, as you thought about this, how would it have affected your faith in Jesus Christ?

11. Is there a memorable event in your life that was a faith builder that you could briefly share with your group?