

Last time, all of Ephesus was in an uproar over 'protecting' their goddess, Diana: 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' Once again, Paul was the target of evil men, especially of evil, unbelieving Jews but, eventually, the town clerk was able to calm the crowd down, saying:

Acts 19:40: *'For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. 'And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.'*

Acts 20:1: *'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, ³ And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.'*

Paul is in Ephesus which is in modern Turkey; he is about to travel west, again, back to Greece; he was planning to go by land, rather than by sea. Macedonia is the northern portion of the arch, past Thrace, which he would travel up by land; in today's World, Macedonia sits between Bulgaria and Albania.

When Paul first went to any area, he went directly into the synagogue to preach to the Jews; the Jews would be riled up against him and he would then go to the Gentiles who seemed to always be far more open to the Gospel; he would gather all those new disciples and establish a small church in that city. Often the Jews would plan to murder him and so the disciples in that area would help him to escape once more. Then he would move on to the next town, often followed by the Jews who would try once again. During his next missionary journey, he would go back to each place he had visited previously to encourage, exhort, teach and strengthen the growing church in that city. This is what Paul did until he was finally imprisoned in Rome from where he wrote his final letters until his death. **Let's look at the map again to get the geography back into our minds:**

We're studying through the Book of Acts which is actually, 'The Acts of the Apostles.' This is the record God has given us of the 'Apostolic Age,' the years of ministry of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the history of the early Church from its birth in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus' Crucifixion, until God's Word to Man had been given in full, with the completion of The Revelation of Jesus to John, the last Apostle to die. When God sent His Holy Spirit, on Pentecost, to fill and regenerate all who had, so far, trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church was born.

This first 50-60 years of the new and growing Church were a unique time, unlike any other. When Peter, James, John, Paul and the rest began to preach forth God's Word, there was nothing written from which their Words could be verified and, so, God worked mighty, miraculous signs for the purpose of confirming the Truth of what they were saying. They were preaching and teaching the Word of God but nothing was, yet, written down. Obvious miraculous signs from God were necessary to confirm the Truth of what they were saying.

Paul traveled throughout Syria, Turkey, Macedonia and Greece, preaching, teaching and establishing many churches. God gave many miraculous signs to verify what Paul was saying, that his were the Words from God; Paul's letters were the first written Words of the New Testament.

When all the Word of God was completed, with the final Revelation of Jesus Christ to John, the time of, and necessity for, miraculous, confirming signs ceased.

We see many signs during the times of the Apostles but we must recognize that Paul never mentions sign gifts from the Holy Spirit, in all his letters of instruction, exhortation and doctrine for the True Church, except in his early first letter to the Corinthians while such gifts were still in operation and even then, Paul is correcting the Corinthians because of their abuse and misuse of gifts such as prophecy and tongues... but then, he writes nothing, at all, throughout Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon... nothing in Hebrews, James, Peter's letters or John's of Jude's, nothing in the Revelation... if sign gifts were to be in operation throughout the life of the Church until Jesus returns for us... surely these things would have been taught and emphasized throughout all these later Epistles but... not so!

Now, the Word of God is Its own confirmation as it is revealed to be so in the hearts of those whom God has

chosen, elected and saved for Himself; to all others, the Word of God is just noise and foolishness:

'For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God... But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' 1Cor 1:18, 2:14

Those to whom God has granted His gifts of repentance and faith to believe do not require miraculous signs of confirmation; His Holy Spirit within us confirms the Truth of His Word to our own hearts.

The hallmark of Paul's ministry is not the miraculous; miracles are given by God to confirm His Word through Paul but they are by far, the minority; something else shines through during his many years of ministry. What we see so clearly in Paul's ministry throughout Acts and his Epistles is his love for the Church, his extreme love for the Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, his love for all the Saints. Jesus loved us to the extent of willingly going to the Cross in our place. Paul loved Jesus so much that he was willing to love His Body and Bride with that same sacrificial love modeled in Jesus Christ.

When Paul was on the road to Damascus, he was cut to the heart when the Lord Jesus Christ saved him not only in spite of his hatred for the Church but even, and especially, **because** of his hatred for the Church and the Lord Jesus Christ; it caused such repentance, love and humility to well up within Paul that he committed his life to serving the Lord Who chose to love him and to save him according to no worth or value in him at all. And, I say that Paul was chosen especially **because** of his hatred for the True Church, first, because it caused such love and loyalty in Paul but, even more so, in that it showed that no one is ineligible or disqualified from coming to God in faith unto Salvation for anything in their past or present; the only thing standing in the way of any person's eternal Salvation is unbelief...period! But... the only way that a person can believe the Truth is if God had chosen that person from the foundation of the World and then granted them His gift of faith to believe. Remember... to all others, God's Word is just noise and foolishness!

A similar situation exists in our country and World today: to the Left, all the words of our present government, Biden, Harris, the UN, et. al., the mindless drones of the Left believe and stand upon all that they hear but to us, on the Right with the wisdom to open our eyes and ears, we see the absolute and abject foolishness, emptiness and destruction of all that is happening around us; we see the truth and we cannot understand how so many others are so foolishly blind and deaf to reality. This is not simply a difference of politics or opinion; this is the ability to discern between right and wrong, truth and lies, black and white, life and death... we think, 'how can they be so blind!?' while the exact same thing is true in the spiritual world: 'how can they not see Truth and reality!?'

This is what Paul dealt with throughout his life and ministry... 'how could the Jews who had the Law and Prophets which all pointed to the coming Messiah, obviously fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ... how could they not see!?' They cried out, 'We have no king but Caesar!' and we hear, 'We have no leader but Harris!' We're finally seeing history to have come full circle which is one of the many reasons we can know that the 'time of the Church' is soon coming to a close.

Paul loved the Church because he loved the Lord Who chose to save him, and he was willing to go through any and all persecution for those whom the Lord Jesus Christ loved and died because He had chosen to love and die for Paul.

Our faithfulness in loving each other, all other True Christians, is the reflection of how much we do or do not really love the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was willing to go through anything for the True Church; to the Corinthians, he wrote:

'Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. ²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. ²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and

nakedness. ²⁸ Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? ³⁰ If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. ³¹ The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not. ³² In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: ³³ And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.' 2Cor 11:23

Paul was willing to persevere under any and all hardships; the strongest statement above: 'that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.' His greatest hardship was his constant care about all the Christians in all the churches, knowing that after he was gone, horrible wolves would come in to seek to destroy and devour all the flocks. That alone must have weighed so heavy upon Paul, constantly.

It is not simply suggested that we love each other, it is commanded that we love each other. Every fellow True Christian whom we don't really love as we could/should, is a reflection of just that much less that we really love the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, yes... I'm pointing at myself first and foremost!

But this is actually one of the main points of Acts: the Gospels show us the love of God the Father in sending us His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Who patiently endured the Cross because of His unimaginable love for us and then the record in Acts shows us an example of one who truly loved the Church as the reflection of his love for the Lord Jesus Christ and was willing to patiently endure every persecution for the sake of the Body and Bride of His Lord. Then, for most of the rest of the New Testament, God used this same faithful Paul to carefully delineate, through the next 12 or 13 letters, most of the Doctrine for the True Church's proper function until He finally comes for us in the soon coming Rapture; when He does, He'll bring Paul with Him so he, along with all of us receives his glorified, eternal body like that of the Lord Jesus Christ; then, we'll all get to meet Paul although, I'm sure we'll all be rather overwhelmed, for some time, in meeting Jesus.

Verse 4: '*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. ⁵ These going before tarried for us at Troas.*'

Paul is planning to return to Asia/Turkey from Greece, by way of Macedonia again. Greece is the S.E. tip of Europe; Turkey is the S.W. tip of Asia with Macedonia being part of the land-bridge between the two.

All of these men, all with Gentile/Greek names, have joined the team and will be going back to Turkey with him but they had gone before and were waiting for Paul, Silas and Luke in Troas which is on the N.W. tip of Turkey. We can see on the map that most of their travels could have been by land but much was by sea to save time; it's better to sail 150 miles than to walk it. On the other hand, Paul preferred to go by land because that is where the people were; people need the Gospel; fishes do not.

Verse 6: '*And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.*'

We see Philippi up in the northern part of Greece, Macedonia at that time; Paul was staying there through Passover and Unleavened Bread which is the 7 days following Passover. Notice: Paul and Silas observed Passover and Unleavened Bread; the Gentiles, he sent on ahead to wait in Troas. Remember: Paul had delivered the letters, from Jerusalem, to all the Gentile churches which released the Gentiles from thinking they had to follow Jewish Law, customs and traditions.

It took Paul and company 5 days to reach Troas where they then stayed another week and on the last day...

Verse 7: '*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.*'

Notice that Luke makes a definite point of telling us that the disciples' customary day to meet was: Sunday,! not Saturday, not on the Sabbath... sorry Seventh Day Adventists, sorry Hebrew Roots groups... Sunday! It is the first day of the week most certainly in commemoration of Jesus Christ's Resurrection on the week's first day. The last thing God would have wanted for the new mostly Gentile True Church was for them to have

started to meet in a harkening back to Judaism by meeting on the Sabbath; after all, it was God's Holy Spirit Who had inspired James and the Council in Jerusalem to send all the letters freeing the Gentiles from any Judaic bondage to the Law. Paul is preaching on and on and on... well past noon when sermons are supposed to be finished, till midnight!

Verse 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.'*

Luke sounds like he was wishing Paul to get to his final point... and poor Eutychus... many of us have been there as some preacher is going on and on and Paul even admits that he is not the best or most dynamic speaker; to the Corinthians Paul wrote: *'For (my) letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.'* 2Cor 10:10 ... poor Eutychus was just dying to get home...

Verse 10: *'And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.'*

Once more, God performs another spectacular miracle to confirm Paul's words to these disciples in Troas. This was, in fact, quite dramatic like Jesus' raising Lazarus but without the grave clothes and, doubtless, there would have been those who insisted that Eutychus never died at all... so very lucky, indeed!

Verse 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.'*

Undeterred, Paul continues on and on, after the dinner break, for another 6 hours or so; what he could have been saying for all that time? Just begin reading Romans through Philemon and you'll know. Paul was preaching for hours upon hours and he was saying all the things that he will later write into his Epistles, all the things which the Lord Jesus Christ had taught him when he was taken up into Heaven to learn all about the New Covenant. And, we know that these are the exact things he was saying in Troas because God caused this dramatic miraculous sign to confirm Paul's words as being God's Words.

Verse 12: *'And they brought the young man alive, and were **not a little** comforted.'*

Luke can't help himself; he must insert his signature phrase while God smiles and lets it go into His Word.

Verse 13: *'And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. ¹⁴ And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene/mit-oo-lay'-nay.'*

The whole gang, including Luke, sailed the short way from Troas to Assos but Paul decided to walk; following the Roman road, he would have walked about 31 miles where he met the rest and they all sailed to Mitylene, the capitol city of the Island of Lesbos; the island is, today, more properly called Mitylene.

Verse 15: *'And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium/tro-gool'-lee-on; and the next day we came to Miletus. 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.'*

Paul had stayed in Philippi for Passover and the following week of Unleavened Bread. Now we see that he had decided to forego traveling to Ephesus, Asia, Turkey, because he wants to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost which, naturally, would have been a very important holy day to the Church since that was the anniversary of the Church's birth, some years before. They left Philippi 8 days after Passover, taking 5 days to reach Troas where they stayed 7 days so that now, they only have 30 days left to make it all the way down to Jerusalem; remember, Pentecost is 50 days past Passover: Passover plus 7 more Sabbaths: 1 + 49. And so we see on our map the final leg of this third missionary journey, traveling by ship all the way down from Miletus to Jerusalem with a few stops along the way about which we will continue to read.

As an aside: on the island of Lesbos lived an ancient Greek poet, a woman named Sappho; many of her love poems were written to women. Consequently, the word 'lesbian' comes from Lesbos. When you hear of Lesbos or Sappho, it refers to lesbians.

