

# Acts 20 Commentary

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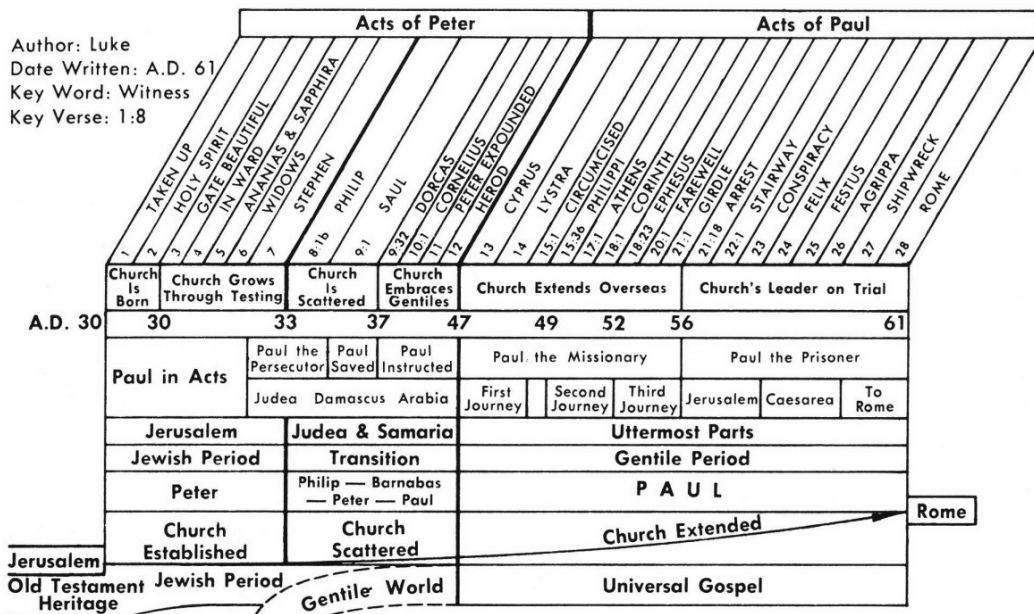
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To go directly to that verse

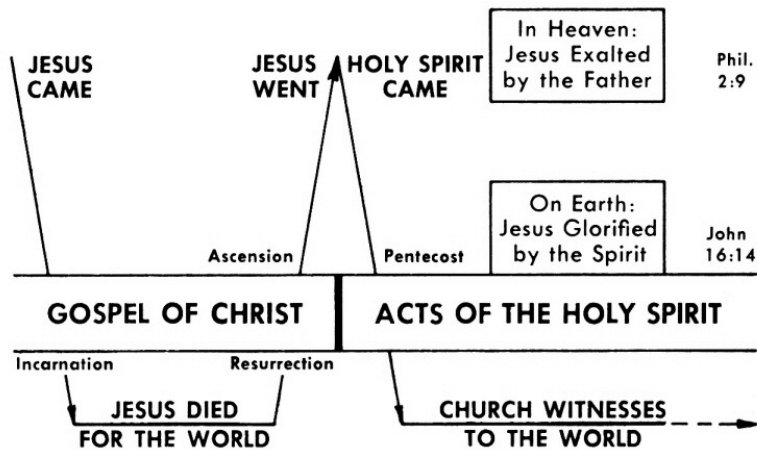
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Author: Luke  
 Date Written: A.D. 61  
 Key Word: Witness  
 Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

Considering the fact that Acts 13 is such a strategic chapter in regard to world evangelism, take a moment and study Irving Jensen's chart at top of the page (click it to enlarge it which is what I have to do at age 72!). Notice the **bold vertical line** (|) at the end of Acts 12 and beginning of Acts 13 which Jensen estimates to be about year 47 (it could be a short time prior). Note the horizontal description of "Church" - **Church Established** in the first 13 years from Acts 1 through Acts 7, then the **Church Scattered** between Acts 8 through Acts 12, which occurred over a period of about 14 years (and remember all dates and times are at best approximations because Luke gives only a few events that allow us to give specific dates, such as the death of Herod in A D 44 in Acts 12:23) and lastly, beginning in Acts 13 (and until the end of this age), the **Church Extended**, this extension being the primarily the fruit of Paul's Three Missionary Journeys which "upset the world!" (Acts 17:6) Now, you have a good grasp of the chronological context of Acts 13. And as they say in the restaurant when your delicious meal is served "Enjoy!" The three missionary journeys are summarized below (this note will be repeated in subsequent chapters). Click links for the maps of each journey.

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| <a href="#">Paul's First Missionary Journey</a>  | Acts 13:4-14:28  |
| <a href="#">Paul's Second Missionary Journey</a> | Acts 15:36-18:22 |
| <a href="#">Paul's Third Missionary Journey</a>  | Acts 18:23-21:26 |

- Maps in table above are from the **Holman Bible Atlas** ([Hardcover/Paperback version](#)) copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved. This is one of the best resources for Bible maps as the maps also include helpful short descriptions of the events portrayed on the maps. Please do not download for use on another website. Thank you.
- [Here is a map](#) with all three journeys on one map.

## THE ITINERARY OF PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

| FIRST   | SECOND                                       | THIRD  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 13:1-3            | 1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 15:36-40     | 1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:23            |
| 2. <a href="#">Seleucia</a> Acts 13:4             | 2. <a href="#">Syria</a> Acts 15:41          | 2. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 18:23-28 |
| 3. <a href="#">Salamis on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:5    | 3. <a href="#">Cilicia</a> Acts 15:41        | 3. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 19:1-41          |
| 4. <a href="#">Paphos on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:6-12  | 4. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 16:1           | 4. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:1           |
| 5. <a href="#">Perga in Pamphylia</a> Acts 13:13  | 5. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 16:1-5        | 5. <a href="#">Greece</a> Acts 20:2              |
| 6. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 13:14-50 | 6. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 16:6 | 6. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:3-5         |
| 7. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 13:51             | 7. <a href="#">Mysia</a> Acts 16:7           | 7. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 20:6            |
| 8. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:6-20            | 8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 16:8-10        | 8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 20:6-12            |
| 9. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 14:20               | 9. <a href="#">Samothrace</a> Acts 16:11     | 9. <a href="#">Assos</a> Acts 20:13              |
| 10. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:21             | 10. <a href="#">Neapolis</a> Acts 16:11      | 10. <a href="#">Mitylene</a> Acts 20:14          |
| 11. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 14:21            | 11. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 16:12      | 11. <a href="#">Samos</a> Acts 20:15             |
| 12. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 14:21   | 12. <a href="#">Amphipolis</a> Acts 17:1     | 12. <a href="#">Miletus</a> Acts 20:15-38        |
| 13. <a href="#">Pamphylia</a> Acts 14:24          | 13. <a href="#">Apollonia</a> Acts 17:1      | 13. <a href="#">Cos</a> Acts 21:1                |
| 14. <a href="#">Perga</a> Acts 14:25              | 14. <a href="#">Thessalonica</a> Acts 17:1-9 | 14. <a href="#">Rhodes</a> Acts 21:1             |
| 15. <a href="#">Attalia</a> Acts 14:25            | 15. <a href="#">Berea</a> Acts 17:10-14      | 15. <a href="#">Patara</a> Acts 21:1             |
| 16. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 14:26            | 16. <a href="#">Athens</a> Acts 17:15-34     | 16. <a href="#">Tyre</a> Acts 21:3-6             |
|   | 17. <a href="#">Corinth</a> Acts 18:1-17     | 17. <a href="#">Ptolemais</a> Acts 21:7          |
|   | 18. <a href="#">Cenchreae</a> Acts 18:18     | 18. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 21:8-14        |
|   | 19. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 18:19       |  |
|   | 20. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 18:22      |  |
|   | 21. <a href="#">Jerusalem</a> Acts 18:22     |  |
|   | 22. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:22       |  |

**Charles Swindoll** points out that "When we study the journeys of Paul in the book of Acts, we're not just reading the travel log of a man; we're observing the redemptive plan of God unfolding as He promised. Through the ministry of Saul of Tarsus, God's mission to reclaim His creation from the death grip of evil would move to its next stage. The plan of this mission was outlined in the Lord's promise at His ascension, where He said,

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..."

1. In Jerusalem [Stage 1: Acts 2–7],
2. and in all Judea and Samaria [Stage 2: Acts 8–12],
3. and even to the remotest part of the earth [Stage 3: Acts 13–28]." (Acts 1:8)

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### John Hannah's Outline for Third Missionary Journey

- D. The third missionary journey of Paul (Acts 18:23-21:16)
  1. The ministry in Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23)
  2. The ministry in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-19:41)
    - a. Instruction of Apollos (Acts 18:24-28)
    - b. Instruction of some of John's followers (Acts 19:1-7)
    - c. Instruction of the Ephesians (Acts 19:8-20)
    - d. Instructions concerning his plans (Acts 19:21-22)
    - e. The riots in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41)
  3. The ministry in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 20:1-5)
  4. The ministry in Troas (Acts 20:6-12)
  5. The ministry in Miletus (Acts 20:13-38)
    - a. His journey to Miletus (Acts 20:13-16)

- b. His message to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17-35)
      - 1. Concerning his ministry (Acts 20:17-27)
      - 2. Concerning the church (Acts 20:28-35)
    - c. His farewell to the Ephesians (Acts 20:36-38)
  - 6. The ministry at Tyre (Acts 21:1-6)
    - a. His journey to Tyre (Acts 21:1-3)
    - b. His ministry in Tyre (Acts 21:4-6)
  - 7. The ministry in Caesarea (Acts 21:7-16)
    - a. Agabus' prediction (Acts 21:7-12)
    - b. Paul's reply (Acts 21:13-14)
    - c. The journey toward Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-16)
- E. The journey of Paul to Rome (Acts 21:17-28:31)
  - 1. His witness in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-23:35)
    - a. Paul's report to the elders (Acts 21:17-26)
    - b. Paul's arrest (Acts 21:27-36)
    - c. Paul's defense (Acts 21:37-23:10)
      - 1. His first defense (Acts 21:37-22:23)
        - a. The background (Acts 21:37-40)
        - b. The content (Acts 22:1-21)
        - c. The result (Acts 22:22-23)
      - 2. His second defense (Acts 22:24-23:10)
        - a. The background (Acts 22:24-29)
        - b. The council (Acts 22:30)
        - c. The content (Acts 23:1-9)
        - d. The conflict (Acts 23:10)
    - d. Paul's deliverance (Acts 23:11-35)
      - 1. The encouragement (Acts 23:11)
      - 2. The plot (Acts 23:12-16)
      - 3. The counterplot (Acts 23:17-24)
      - 4. The letter to Felix (Acts 23:25-30)
      - 5. The deliverance to Felix (Acts 23:31-35)
  - 2. His witness in Caesarea (Acts 24:1-26:32)
    - a. Paul's defense before Felix (Acts 24:1-27)
      - 1. The setting (Acts 24:1)
      - 2. The accusations of Tertullus (Acts 24:2-9)
      - 3. The reply of Paul (Acts 24:10-21)
      - 4. The consequences (Acts 24:22-27)
    - b. Paul's defense before Festus (Acts 25:1-12)
      - 1. The setting (Acts 25:1-5)
      - 2. The trial (Acts 25:6-11)
      - 3. The result (Acts 25:12)
    - c. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:32)
      - 1. The arrival of Agrippa (Acts 25:13)
      - 2. Festus' presentation of Paul's case (Acts 25:14-22)
      - 3. Festus' presentation of Paul (Acts 25:23-27)
      - 4. Paul's defense before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-23)
      - 5. Paul's answer to Festus (Acts 26:24-26)
      - 6. Paul's interaction with Agrippa (Acts 26:27-29)
      - 7. The conclusion (Acts 26:30-32)
  - 3. His witness on the way to Rome (Acts 27:1-28:15)
    - a. His witness aboard ship (Acts 27:1-44)
    - b. His witness on Malta (Acts 28:1-15)
      - 1. Paul's miraculous preservation (Acts 28:1-6)
      - 2. Paul's healing of Publius' father (Acts 28:7-10)
      - 3. Paul's continued journey toward Rome (Acts 28:11-15)
  - 4. His witness in Rome (Acts 28:16-31)
    - a. The occasion for his witness (Acts 28:16-22)

- b. The content of his witness (Acts 28:23-28)
- c. The result of his witness (Acts 28:29)
- d. The summary of Paul's witness in Rome (Acts 28:30-31)
- [Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) - Recommended Resource

**Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.**

NET Acts 20:1 After the disturbance had ended, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left to go to Macedonia.

GNT Acts 20:1 Μετ ὃ τ πασασθαι τν θ ρυβον μεταπεμψ μενος Πα λος το ς μαθητ ς κα παρακαλ σας, σπασ μενος ξ λθεν πορε εσθαι ε ς Μακεδον αν.

NLT Acts 20:1 When the uproar was over, Paul sent for the believers and encouraged them. Then he said good-bye and left for Macedonia.

KJV 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.

ESV Acts 20:1 After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia.

ASV Acts 20:1 And after the uproar ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia.

CSB Acts 20:1 After the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples, encouraged them, and after saying good-bye, departed to go to Macedonia.

NIV Acts 20:1 When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia.

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

NRS Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia.

YLT Acts 20:1 And after the ceasing of the tumult, Paul having called near the disciples, and having embraced them, went forth to go on to Macedonia;

- **After the uproar had ceased:** Acts 19:23-41
- **taken his leave** (KJV embraced them): Acts 20:10,37 21:5,6 Ge 48:10 1Sa 20:41,42 Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12 1Th 5:26
- **he left to go to Macedonia:** Acts 19:21 1Co 16:5 2Co 7:5 1Ti 1:3
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL LEFT FOR MACEDONIA

**Bob Deffinbaugh** - The structure of the text is quite simple. There are four main sections. The first paragraph (Acts 20:1-6) takes us from **Ephesus** to **Troas** (Ed: Troas is on the NW coast of Turkey [\[click map below\]](#) 130 miles north of Ephesus), the scene of Paul's ministry to the church there, and the raising of Eutychus, which is described in the second paragraph (Acts 20:7-12). The third paragraph (Acts 20:13-17) takes us from Troas down to **Miletus**, where Paul calls the Ephesian elders and gives them his parting words of exhortation and admonition, described in the last (and major) section (Acts 20:18-38). The structure of this chapter can thus be summarized this way: From Ephesus to Troas -- Acts 20:1-6 Paul's ministry in Troas -- Acts 20:7-12 From Troas to Miletus -- Acts 20:13-17 Paul's ministry to the Ephesian elders -- Acts 20:18-38. Acts 20 will be much more meaningful to you if you take time to review the locations on the map (below) when Luke mentions a city or province. ([Paul's Parting Words](#))

In Acts 19:21-22+ Paul relates his plan to visit Jerusalem, and then Rome, and that Paul sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead into Macedonia. We also read of Paul's plans as he outlined them in his first letter to the Corinthians:

Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed **in the Spirit** (Ed: I love this phrase -- it should also be our daily prayer to purpose in the Spirit and not in the flesh - see related article [Praying in the Spirit](#)) to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." And having sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. (Acts 19:21-22+)

We also read of Paul's plans in 1 Corinthians...

Now concerning the collection for the saints (in Jerusalem), as I directed the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come. When I arrive, whomever you may approve, I will send them with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem; and if it is fitting for me to go also, they will go with me. But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits. But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Cor 16:1-9)

**Bob Deffinbaugh** gives us the background of Acts 20 writing that

"Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote this epistle to the Corinthians. He spoke of the great opportunities there, as well as great opposition. It was his intention to stay in Ephesus until after Pentecost, and then to travel to Macedonia and finally on to Corinth, where he intended to spend the winter. Paul's schedule was changed, however, for the uprising at Ephesus, brought about by Demetrius and his colleagues (Acts 19:23ff.), forced him to move up his departure date, as Luke informs us in verse 1 of Acts 20."

Luke's account of Paul's ministry from the time he left Ephesus until he reached Troas is incredibly brief. It is his intention to focus on Paul's arrival and subsequent arrest in Jerusalem, which will then turn him toward Rome. He will not allow himself to be distracted by the many interesting aspects of Paul's journeys or ministry because they do not contribute to his argument.

Perhaps the biggest omission is Luke's refusal to write anything about Paul's primary purpose for going first to Macedonia and Greece, and then to Jerusalem. If Paul was in Ephesus and he wanted to go to Jerusalem, he would have headed in a southerly direction. Instead, Paul went north and west, in the opposite direction of Jerusalem. Why? The answer to this question is very obvious from Paul's writings. We see it mentioned in 1 Corinthians chapter 16, above, as well in these passages from the pen of the apostle, texts of which I am confident Luke must have been aware:

22 For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; 23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you 24 whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased {to do so,} and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. 28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. 29 And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ (Romans 15:22-29).

But thanks be to God, who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. 18 And we have sent along with him the brother whose fame in {the things of} the gospel {has spread} through all the churches; 19 and not only {this,} but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and {to show} our readiness, 20 taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration of this generous gift;

21 for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.  
22 And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many things, but now even more diligent, because of {his} great confidence in you (2 Corinthians 8:16-22).

When Paul met with James, Peter, and John in Jerusalem, they recognized his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. The only thing they urged upon Paul was that he remember the poor, which Paul was eager to do (Galatians 2:7-10). Paul had previously been involved in taking gifts to the poor saints in Judea (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25), but he wanted to take up a collection in Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece, to take with him when he went to Jerusalem again. Thus Paul gave specific instructions in 1 and 2 Corinthians about the collection. Paul doubled back, going north instead of south, so that he could collect the offerings from these churches in Macedonia, Achaia, and Greece, and then go down to Jerusalem.

There were several hitches in the plans Paul made. First, the riot at Ephesus caused Paul to leave Ephesus earlier than he expected. Second, when Paul was about ready to leave from Corinth, he learned of a plot on the part of the Jews, to kill him (Acts 20:3), and so he canceled his boat trip and journey by land back up to Macedonia, and then, after the feast of unleavened bread, across the Aegean Sea to Asia, where he ended up at Troas, the setting for the next incident to be recorded by Luke—Paul's ministry at Troas, including the death and raising of Eutychus. ([Paul's Parting Words - Acts 20:1-38](#))

**After the uproar had ceased:** Literally, after the ceasing of the uproar. The **uproar** did cease and praise God there was no loss of life and Paul was unharmed. What **uproar**? Of course, Luke is referring to the riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41+) which had been incited by Demetrius the silversmith upset over Paul's denigration of Artemis (Demetrius declared "Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all." Acts 19:26+)

**Jack Arnold** reminds us of the setting in Acts 19 - Paul had preached Christ in Ephesus, and so many people were trusting Christ and turning away from idolatry that the personal pocketbooks of the silversmiths and the economy of Ephesus was being hurt since people were no longer buying small silver shrines of the goddess Artemis. We know that when Christ is preached, culture and society are deeply affected as men turn to Christ. We also know that those who faithfully preach Christ are attacked by the unbelieving community. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**Uproar** (2351) (**thorubos** from **throeo** - to be troubled, disturbed) describes a noise, uproar, clamor, disturbance. It is a noisy tumult, a state of commotion and noise and confusion, with potential for a **riot**. **Louw-Nida** adds **thorubos** is "disorderly behavior of people in violent opposition to authority." In Mark 5:38 **thorubos** describes the noise produced by people wailing and mourning. The related verb **turbazo** is used in Lk 10:41+ of Jesus' description of Martha's mind as "**bothered**" - she had both inward anxiety and outward agitation.

**MacArthur** - Matthew used (thorubus) to describe the disturbance that took place during Pilate's trial of Jesus (Matt. 27:24). Luke used it later in Acts to describe the riot that broke out when Paul visited the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 21:34). In all three instances the word describes an uncontrollable, hysterical mob.

**BDAG** - 1. a raising of voices that contributes to lack of understanding - noise, clamor 2. a state of confusion (Pr 1:27) 3. a state or condition of varying degrees of commotion - turmoil, excitement, uproar.

**Thorubos** - 7x in 7v - Usage: commotion(1), **riot**(3), uproar(3).

Matthew 26:5 But they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise a **riot** might occur among the people."

Matthew 27:24 When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a **riot** was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood; see to that yourselves."

Mark 5:38 They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He saw a **commotion**, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

**Comment:** Jesus used the verb form thorubeo in Mark 5:39 - "And entering in, He said to them, "Whymake a **commotion** (thorubeo) and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." Jesus had dismissed one crowd (verse 37), but finds the house occupied by the hired mourners making bedlam (thorubos) as if that showed grief with their ostentatious noise.

Mark 14:2 for they were saying, "Not during the festival, otherwise there might be **riot** of the people."

Acts 20:1 After the **uproar** had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.

Acts 21:34+ But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the **uproar**, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.

Acts 24:18+ in which they found me occupied in the temple, having been purified, without any crowd or **uproar**. But there were some Jews from Asia--

**Thorubos** - 8x in [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Ezra 10:9; Est. 1:1; Pr. 1:27 (When your **dread** comes like a storm); Pr 23:29 (who has **sorrow**); Mic. 7:12; Jer. 30:18; Ezek. 7:4, 11; Dan. 10:6

**Ceased** (3973) (**pauo**) means to cease from an activity in which one is engaged. **Paou** in the active sense means to cause something or someone to cease from some activity or state. To stop, restrain, refrain, quit, desist, come to an end.

**Paul sent for:** Most people would have been grateful the riot and ceased and probably have sought to leave Ephesus as quickly as possible. But not Paul who was always concerned for the spiritual welfare of the churches he had had a role in founding. And so he called to himself or summoned the disciples at Ephesus.

**The disciples** were learners, those who intentionally learned by inquiry and observation. They were adherents of the truths taught by Paul, truth they had received and now used as their rule of conduct. It is notable that in the book of Acts the believers are most often designated as "disciples." There is a teaching that suggests a "disciple" is a "believer on steroids" (so to speak), implying that all believers are not necessarily of the status of disciples. Dr Luke's record in Acts would strongly refute such a teaching. What had Jesus commanded? To make believers are make disciples?

Paul took Jesus' words literally and was obedient the command of His Lord -

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and **make disciples** ([matheteuo](#) the one command in the Great Commission) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Mt 28:18-20

**Comment:** Some note that since the Greek word for disciples is not used in the epistles this argues against the premise that every believer is a disciple. While the word mathetes is not present in the epistles, the concept clearly is present - e.g., see 2 Timothy 3:10-11 [note](#) which is about as clear of a description of a disciple as one could find in the Bible!

**Disciples** (3101) ([mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers.

**Related Word Study:** [matheteuo - make disciples](#)

**Ralph Earle** - As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**Barclay** writes that "All his life a Christian should be learning more and more about Jesus. The shut mind is the end of discipleship!" ([Matthew 5 Commentary - Daily Study Bible - online](#))

**Mounce** - Typically in the Jewish world, a disciple would voluntarily join a school or otherwise seek out a master rabbi; however, Jesus seeks out and chooses those whom he wants as his disciples (Mk 1:17; 2:14; Lk 5:1–11; cf. Mt 4:18–21). A dedicated disciple was generally expected someday to become a rabbi himself, yet Jesus teaches his disciples that he will always be their rabbi and they will have a lifetime of discipleship (Mt 23:8; cf. Mt 10:24–25, 37; Lk 14:26–27; Jn 11:16). Jesus' disciples are bound to him and to God's will (Mt 12:46–50; cf. Mk 3:31–45). They are called to a lifetime of work and service (Mt 16:15–19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:10), (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament words: Zondervan)

**See Related Articles on Making Disciples**

- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2](#)
- [Make Disciples 3](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)

- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

**Exhorted them** - Given the uproar, Paul knew that these saints were in need of comforting, encouraging words. This exhortation is distinct from his meeting with the leaders of the church at Ephesus described in Acts 20:29-31 ([±](#)).

**Exhorted** (Encouraged, comforted, implored) ([3870](#)) ([parakaleo](#) from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + [kaleo \[word study\]](#) = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. See the following discussion for elaboration on the nuances of this great Greek verb.

**Kent Hughes** illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example - I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside **encouraging**....[exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use.

- [See Six Ways You Can Encourage Someone Today](#)

**Taken his leave** ([782](#)) ([aspazomai](#) from **a** + **spao** = draw out as a sword, pull, breathe) means to enfold in arms, to welcome, to embrace. In classical literature aspazomai can also be used of physical expressions of welcome, such as "embrace" and "kiss." **Aspazomai** in this verse means to draw to oneself in embrace in farewell.

**Taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia**- "Only after charging the Ephesian believers did Paul take his leave of them to begin his planned trip to Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia (cf. Acts 19:21)." (MacArthur)

**A T Robertson** notes "Both verbs (**left** = *exerchomai* in aorist and **to go** = *poreuomai* in present tense), single act and then a process. Luke here condenses what was probably a whole year of Paul's life and work as we gather from 2 Corinthians, one of Paul's "weighty and powerful" letters as his enemies called them (2 Cor. 10:10). "This epistle more than any other is a revelation of Paul's own heart: it is his spiritual autobiography and *apologia pro vita sua*."

**To go to Macedonia:** [See Macedonia on Map above](#)

Recall that just before the **uproar** broke out in Ephesus Luke recorded "Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia." (Acts 19:21) Note from the [map above](#) in Ephesus Paul was southeast of Macedonia and directly east from Achaia. This means he was most likely planning on traveling to Troas (see [map](#)) to cross the sea to Macedonia. The churches of Philippi and Thessalonica had been founded in Macedonia and this would have given him an opportunity to exhort them also in the faith.

Paul was clearly concerned about the church in Corinth as shown in these passages...

1 Corinthians 16:5-9 But I will come to you after I go through Macedonia, for I am going through Macedonia; and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now just in passing; for I hope to remain with you for some time, if the Lord permits. But I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost; for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

2 Corinthians 2:12-13 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, **I had no rest for my spirit**, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

Paul had sent Titus to Corinth to find out their reaction to his "painful letter of tears," but when Titus did not meet him in Troas, he left for Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:3-4, 12-13), where he met Titus (probably at Philippi), wrote 2 Corinthians, and then finally went to Corinth, where he wrote his **Epistle to the Romans**, and from there set out for Jerusalem with the collection for the saints. As an aside, note that Paul practices what he preaches -- he redeemed the time writing the [magnum opus](#) of Romans! (see Eph 5:16<sup>±</sup>)

**Related Resource**

- [Redeem the Time](#)

**Marshall** - "We have valuable commentaries on this journey from Paul's own pen in 2 Corinthians, which looks forward to the visit which he paid to Corinth, and in Romans, which was written during Paul's stay at Corinth and throws light on his immediate plans for travel. From these letters we learn of the importance which Paul attached to the collection of money which he was taking from the Gentile churches under his superintendence to help the church in Jerusalem with caring for its poorer members." (TNTC)

**Longnecker** - One activity that especially concerned Paul at this time was collecting money for the relief of impoverished believers at Jerusalem ... Paul viewed it as a symbol of unity that would help his Gentile converts realize their debt to the mother church in Jerusalem. (EBC)

**Ryrie** - Acts 20:1-4 Luke's brevity here, a mere mention of the missionary team and a journey through Macedonia revisiting established communities, suggests that Acts could have been a much longer book. 2 Cor. 2:12-13; 7:5-7 give further information about this period of Paul's activities. (RSB)

### Acts 20:2 When he had gone through those districts and had given them much exhortation, he came to Greece.

NET Acts 20:2 After he had gone through those regions and **spoken many words of encouragement** to the believers there, he came to Greece,

GNT Acts 20:2 διελθὼν δὲ τμηρῆκενακαπαρακαλάσας αὐτοὺς ἄλλοις πολλοῖς ἐστὶν ἦλθε

NLT Acts 20:2 While there, he encouraged the believers in all the towns he passed through. Then he traveled down to Greece,

KJV Acts 20:2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

ESV Acts 20:2 When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece.

ASV Acts 20:2 And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece.

CSB Acts 20:2 And when he had passed through those areas and exhorted them at length, he came to Greece

NIV Acts 20:2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece,

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

NRS Acts 20:2 When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much encouragement, he came to Greece,

YLT Acts 20:2 and having gone through those parts, and having exhorted them with many words, he came to Greece;

- **When he had gone through those districts:** Ac 20:6 16:12 17:1,10
- **had given them much exhortation:** Ac 20:7,11 2:40 14:22 15:41 Col 1:28 1Th 2:3,11 4:1, Ci A.M. 4064, A.D. 60
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MORE EXHORTATION TO THE DISCIPLES IN MACEDONIA

**I agree with John MacArthur's comments** - Leaving Ephesus, Paul crossed the Aegean Sea to Macedonia, probably by way of Troas. The main purpose of his journey through Macedonia was to collect an offering for the poor believers at Jerusalem (see the next section) (See also comments on Acts 19:21). Still, he could not pass up the opportunity to instruct the Macedonian believers

**AND WHEN HE HAD GONE THROUGH THOSE DISTRICTS:** We have no way of knowing why Luke did not tell of Paul's stay in **Troas** (2 Cor. 2:12-13) nor of meeting Titus in **Macedonia** (2 Cor. 2:13 to 2 Cor 7:16) nor of Paul's visit to **Illyricum** (Ro 15:19-20) to

give time for 2 Corinthians to do its work (2 Cor. 13), one of the most stirring experiences in Paul's whole career when he opened his heart to the Corinthians and won final victory in the church by the help of Titus who also helped him round up the great collection in Achaia. He wrote II Corinthians during this period after Titus arrived from Corinth. The unity of II Corinthians is here assumed. Paul probably met Luke again in Macedonia, but all this is passed by except by the general phrase: '**had given them much exhortation**'... During this period {the 'three months' of Acts 20:3} Paul may have written Galatians as Lightfoot argued and certainly did Romans. We do not have to say that Luke was ignorant of Paul's work during this period, only that he did not choose to enlarge upon it." (Comments from A T Robertson)

**MacArthur** - In 2 Corinthians, written from Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12–13; 7:5–6), Paul devotes two entire chapters to the collection (2 Cor. 8–9). In Romans, written from the Achaian city of Corinth (Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14), he penned the Romans 15:25-28.

**Arnold** - Paul's ministry in Macedonia was not one of evangelization but edification. He went back to encourage these believers who were undoubtedly facing much persecution. He gave them "much exhortation," for he knew how important it was for these Christians to know the truth, for the truth would set them free. Paul had a burden for follow-up. He did not win men to Christ and leave them alone. Even years later he desired to go back and make sure his converts were walking in the faith once for all delivered to the saints. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**AND HAD GIVEN THEM MUCH EXHORTATION:** Literally, "having exhorted them (the Macedonian brethren) with many words ([logos](#))". "**With many words**" undoubtedly centered on **THE WORD**, the best mode of exhortation then and today.

**THOUGHT** - When you meet with other disciples for coffee, etc, **do you exhort and encourage using the literal Word of God?** Don't waste your providential encounters beloved! In your time of fellowship make sure that you give **at least some time to focus on the Word of God's grace** You will both walk away more edified and satisfied. I learned this recently when I met with my accountability partner and drew his attention to a specific verse in Romans 8 which prompted him to look it up that very moment. The next day I was speaking with him on the phone and he related how he had been prompted to meditate on the surrounding passages in Romans 8 and had gleaned additional insights as the Spirit illumined the truth. He would not have done that if our conversation had been solely about family and secular issues. There is nothing wrong in speaking of these latter items. Food without salt is edible but not really enjoyable, so just make sure to "sprinkle" a little "salt" of the Word on your conversations.

**Given... exhortation** ([3870](#)) is same verb [parakaleo](#) used in the previous verse (see Acts 20:1)

**John MacArthur** - Unfortunately, Paul's commitment to proclaim the truth of God is not in vogue today. Preaching that exhorts from the Word no longer holds the central place it held in the early church (Acts 10:42; 13:5, 32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:3, 13; 20:25; 28:31). Paul's charge to Timothy to "give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching" (1 Tim. 4:13) (Luke Commentary)

**He came to Greece:** To the Roman province of Achaia ([See Map](#))

**Vincent** - Luke uses **Achaia** (Acts 19:21) and **Greece** synonymously, as distinguished from Macedonia.

**Acts 20:3 And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.**

NET Acts 20:3 where he stayed for three months. Because the Jews had made a plot against him as he was intending to sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

GNT Acts 20:3 ποι σας τε μ νας τρε ς γενομ νης πιβουλ ς ατ π τ ν ουδα ων μ λλοντι ν γεσθαι ε ς τ ν Συρ αν, γ νετο γν μης το ποστρ φειν δι Μακεδον ας.

NLT Acts 20:3 where he stayed for three months. He was preparing to sail back to Syria when he discovered a plot by some Jews against his life, so he decided to return through Macedonia.

KJV Acts 20:3 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.

ESV Acts 20:3 There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

ASV Acts 20:3 And when he had spent three months there, and a plot was laid against him by Jews as he

was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia.

CSB Acts 20:3 and stayed three months. When he was about to set sail for Syria, a plot was devised against him by the Jews, so a decision was made to go back through Macedonia.

NIV Acts 20:3 where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

NKJ 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.

NRS Acts 20:3 where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews, and so he decided to return through Macedonia.

YLT having made also three months' stay -- a counsel of the Jews having been against him -- being about to set forth to Syria, **there came to him a resolution of returning** through Macedonia.

- **when a plot was formed against him by the Jews** Ac 20:19 9:23,24 23:12-15 25:3 Ezr 8:31 Pr 1:11 Jer 5:26 2Co 7:5 2Co 11:26
- **he was about to set sail for Syria:** Ac 18:18 21:3 Ga 1:21
- **he decided to return through Macedonia :** Ac 19:21 2Co 1:15
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**AND HE SPENT 3 MONTHS THERE:** Dr Luke does not state specifically where Paul resided for these 3 months in Achaia (Greece), but most likely he stayed in Corinth. Paul had intended to catch a ship at Genchrea (Corinth's port) carrying Jewish pilgrims to Palestine for Passover.

But as was frequently the case with Paul (cp 2 Cor. 11:26), his proclamation of the Gospel raised up extreme opposition. We know from the previous discussion ([see note](#)), that Paul was planning to go to Jerusalem and here Luke says **he was about to set sail for Syria** which would be a stopover prior to Jerusalem. However, that sea voyage did not take place **forthere came to him a resolution of returning through Macedonia** (and doubtless the cities of Thessalonica and Phippi and the churches in those cities). What the Jews meant for evil God used for good to further encourage the saints in these two strategic Macedonian churches, not to mention the Bereans (Acts 17:11) who were also in Macedonia.

**David Guzik** - Paul's extended time in this region may help to explain a bit of a puzzle. In Romans 15:19, Paul made this claim: *So that from Jerusalem and round to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.* The puzzle is that the Book of Acts never specifically mentions a visit by Paul to [Illyricum](#) ([see map](#) = dark brown region), but it may fit in here at Acts 20:2–3, where Paul had gone over that region ... and stayed three months. Illyricum is due west from Thessalonica, and there was a famous Roman Road (the [Via Egnatia](#)) that went between Thessalonica and the Roman province of Illyricum. Today, the area of Illyricum is modern day Albania, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea, with the mainland of Italy westward across the water. The mention of Illyricum in Romans 15:19 reminds us that the Book of Acts, as wonderful as it is, is by no means a complete accounting of all that God did through His people in the first century. There is much, even in the life of the Apostle Paul, that is not described—not to mention the life and work of many, many others. ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Robertson on three months** - Literally, "having done three months," the same idiom in Acts 14:3; Acts 18:23; James 5:13. During this period Paul may have written Galatians as Lightfoot argued and certainly did Romans. We do not have to say that Luke was ignorant of Paul's work during this period, only that he did not choose to enlarge upon it.

**Arnold** - Paul intended to sail directly from Corinth to Jerusalem, for he wanted to be there for the Feast of the Passover. However, this plot involved the ship on which he was to sail. The unbelieving Jews hated Paul because they thought him a heretic and a disturber of the Jewish religious establishment. It was their plan to rub Paul out, probably by tossing him overboard somewhere on the voyage. God was faithful to keep His servant Paul from all the evil imaginations of men. Satan, through human instruments, is always trying to get people to plot against true preachers of the Word. There is always a plot by someone to get rid of a pastor, evangelist, missionary or Christian worker. When this happens, the Christian worker must depend wholly on God to fight his battles. "No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD" (Isaiah 54:17). ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**And when a plot was formed against him:** "a plot by the Jews having come against him." This plot is one of several noted by Luke (Acts 9:20; 20:19; 23:30). These Jews had undoubtedly "not forgotten the shocking conversions of the synagogue leaders Crispus (18:8) and Sosthenes (Acts 18:17; 1 Cor. 1:1) or their humiliating defeat before the proconsul Gallio (Acts 18:12–17)" (MacArthur)

**Plot** (1917)(**epiboule** from **epi** = upon, against + **boule** = plan) describes a purpose or design against someone, a secret plan to do harm to someone. A plot, a scheme or a conspiracy. **Louw-Nida** - "a plan for treacherous activity against someone." All 4 NT occurrences refer to the plots of the Jews directed against Paul (Acts 9:24; 20:3,19; 23:30).

**Ryrie** suggests that this plot was "probably to kill Paul on board ship and throw his body overboard, so Paul returned overland through Macedonia."

**Williams** - It may have been planned to attack him on board ship, especially if the vessel was crowded with Jewish pilgrims for Passover or Pentecost.

**By the Jews - Robertson** - note that this plot is **by the Jews**, not the Judaizers whom Paul discusses so vehemently in 2 Cor. 10–13. They had given Paul much anguish of heart as is shown in 1 Cor. and in 2 Cor. 1–7, but that trouble seems now past. It is Paul's old enemies in Corinth who had cherished all these years their defeat at the hands of Gallio (Acts 18:5–17) who now took advantage of Paul's plans for departure to compass his death if possible. As

**Jews** (2453)(**loudaios** ultimately derived from Hebrew Yehudi = a member of the tribe of Judah) is an adjective refers to one who belongs to the Jewish race with focus on adherence to Mosaic tradition (Acts 10:28, 22:3, 21:39). A Jew in respect to race or religion (as opposed to Gentiles). In the plural, it means the Jews, the people of ancient Palestine. In John's Gospel loudaios was used of those hostile to Jesus, especially the Jewish leaders (Jn 2:18, 5:16ff, 6:41, 7:1, 10:31ff, 19:7). Jesus is referred to as **King of the Jews** (Mt 2:2, Mt 27:11, Mk 15:2, Lk 23:3, Jn 18:33). Jews hated the Samaritans (Jn 4:9) and the missionary activity of Paul (Acts 9:23, 13:45, 14:19, 20:3, 21:27, 23:12, 25:7).

**Set sail** (Present Middle Infinitive of anago) Literally means movement from lower to a higher point . In the Middle/Passive Voice it was a nautical term meaning to put (out) to sea, set sail, as in Acts 13:13 (Paul and his companions put out to sea)

**Set Sail** recalls one of Ray Boltz's songs - **Set Sail**. Here is his related song, one of his greatest hits **The Anchor Holds**.

**Set sail** (321)(**anago** from **ana** = up, again, away + **ago** = to bring, lead) literally speaks of movement from a lower to a higher point (Lk 4:5 = Satan "**led Him up** and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.", Mt 17:1 = "led them up on a high mountain", Lk 2:22 = "they **brought Him up** to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord," , Mt 4:1 "Jesus was **led up** by the Spirit"). In biblical interpretation, the term "anagogical" refers to a method used by the Alexandrian School to uncover secret, spiritual meanings in scriptural texts<sup>2</sup>. This approach can lead to mysterious or elevated interpretations, such as viewing the Sabbath rest as symbolizing the repose of saints in heaven

- (1) **Anago** means to bring, lead, carry, or take up (Lk 2:22; 4:5; 22:26; Acts 7:41; 9:39; 12:4; 16:34; Ro 10:7; Heb. 13:20; Lxx = Ge 50:24; Ex. 8:5; Lev 14:20; 1 Ki 3:15; Job 1:5; Ps. 30:4; 71:20; Isa 57:6).
- (2) Figuratively **anago** meant to bring or offer up as a sacrifice (Acts 7:41).
- (3) **Anago** was a nautical technical term - In the passive voice it was a nautical term meaning to put (out) to sea, set sail. (Luke 8:22; Acts 13:13; 16:11; 18:21; 20:3, 13; 21:1, 2; 27:2, 4, 12, 21; 28:10, 11).
- (4) **Anago** means to bring back (Ro 10:7 and Heb 13:20 - in conjunction with ek nekrōn, "from the dead," to refer to resurrection, or being brought up from the dead.

**Anago** - 23x in 23v - Usage: bring(2), brought(5), launched(1), led up(2), put out to sea(4), putting out to sea(1), set sail(7), setting sail(1).

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was **led up** by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Luke 2:22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they **brought Him up** to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

Luke 4:5 And he **led Him up** and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

**Comment** - Note the dramatic contrast of being led by the Holy Spirit in Mt 4:1 and the unholy spirit in Lk 4:5! The devil may have led Jesus up to tempt Him, but recall that Jesus is filled with the Spirit (Lk 4:1. Beloved, the demonic forces may (probably will) tempt us (working in concert with our fallen flesh - James 1:14-15<sup>+</sup>) also but Jesus gave us the perfect example to follow in order to defeat the schemes of the devil! And what is Jesus' example - BE CONTINUALLY FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT (Eph 5:18<sup>+</sup>)!!! This begs the question - Are you venturing out each morning into this dark, fallen, tempting world filled with the Spirit or filled with self? The latter is a recipe for spiritual defeat and disaster!

**See related study - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)**

**UBS Handbook** - Since anagō usually means 'to bring to a high place' and not 'to lift up in the air' it appears

preferable to understand it here in that sense too.

Luke 8:22 Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they **launched** out.

**Vincent's Note on anago** - The verb literally means to lead up; hence to lead up to the high sea, or take to sea; put to sea. It is the word used of Jesus' being led up into the wilderness and the mount of temptation (Matt. 4:1; Luke 2:22); also of bringing up a sacrifice to an idol-altar (Acts 7:41). Often in Acts in the accounts of Paul's voyages.

Acts 7:41 "At that time they made a calf and**brought** a sacrifice to the idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.

Acts 9:39 So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they**brought** him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them.

Acts 12:4 When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to **bring** him out before the people.

**Comment** - Peter was in the inner prison or lower ward and so would be led up, in the sense of being brought up for trial.

Acts 13:13 Now Paul and his companions **put out to sea** from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Acts 16:11 So **putting out to sea** from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;

34 And he **brought** them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

Acts 18:21 but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," **heset sail** from Ephesus.

Acts 20:3 And there he spent three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to **set sail** for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

13 But we, going ahead to the ship, **set sail** for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land.

Acts 21:1 When we had parted from them and **had set sail**, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara;

2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and **set sail**.

Acts 27:2 And embarking in an Adramyttian ship, which was about to sail to the regions along the coast of Asia, we **put out to sea** accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica.

4 From there we put out to sea and sailed under the shelter of Cyprus because the winds were contrary.

12 Because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to **put out to sea** from there, if somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.

21 When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, "Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not **to have set sail** from Crete and incurred this damage and loss.

Acts 28:10 They also honored us with many marks of respect; and when we**were setting sail**, they supplied us with all we needed.

11 At the end of three months we **set sail** on an Alexandrian ship which had wintered at the island, and which had the Twin Brothers for its figurehead.

Romans 10:7 or 'WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?' (that is, to **bring** Christ **up** from the dead)."

Hebrews 13:20 Now the God of peace, who **brought up** from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

**Anagō** is used 100x in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#), particularly with reference to God bringing up the Israelites from Egypt,(Ex 33:12, 15, Lev 11:45, Nu 14:13, 2 Sa 7:6, 1 Ki 9:9, Mic. 6:4) and of David bringing the ark up to Jerusalem after it is returned from the Philistines (2 Sa 6:2, 12:6:15).

**Anago** - 100x in 95v in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) -

Ge 42:37; 50:24 ("bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob"); Ex 8:5-7 ("frogs come up"), Ex 10:14 ("locusts came up"); Ex 33:12, 15; Lev. 11:3-5, 45 ("For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy."); Nu 14:13; 16:13; 20:4f; Deut. 14:6f; Jos. 7:3, 24; 24:17, 32; Jdg. 6:8, 13; 1 Sam. 2:6; 6:21; 7:1; 8:8; 10:18; 12:6; 28:8, 11; 2 Sam. 6:2, 12, 2 Sam. 6:15; 7:6; 1 Ki. 3:15; 9:9, 15; 12:28; 18:44; 2 Ki. 2:1; 10:24; 17:7, 36; 23:8; 1 Chr. 13:6; 15:25, 28; 17:5; 2 Chr. 6:5; 8:8, 11; Ps. 30:3; 40:2; 71:20f; 78:52; 81:10; 102:24; 135:7; Isa. 8:7; Jer. 2:6; 7:22; 10:13; 11:4; 16:14f; 23:7; 30:17; 31:9; 33:6; 38:10, 13; 51:16; Ezek. 23:46; 26:3, 19; 29:4; 32:3; 37:6, 12f; 38:16; 39:2; Hos. 12:9, 13; 13:4; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 4:10; 9:7; Mic. 6:4

**Decided to return through Macedonia:** ([See Map](#))

**Decided** is actually 2 words - **ginomai** = came into being (aorist middle indicative) + **gnome**= purpose, opinion, decision

**Gnome** ([1106](#)) basically refers to the mind as the instrument of knowing; (1) purpose, intention, mind 1 Cor 1:10; Rev 17:13; decision, resolve Acts 20:3; Rev 17:17. (2) opinion, judgment 1 Cor 7:25, 40; 2 Cor 8:10; Acts 4:18 (3) previous knowledge, consent Philemon 1:14. [English = [gnome](#)] [p

**Friberg** - (1) as the direction of one's thinking intention, disposition, will (1Cor 1.10); (2) as the result of one's consideration resolve, decision, purpose (Acts 20.3); (3) as advice, distinct from command counsel, opinion, judgment (1Cor 7.25); (4) as the result of sharing another's consideration consent, previous knowledge, agreement (Philemon 1:14)

**Gilbrant** - Versatility characterizes **gnōmē** in the classical writings. Its definition ranges in meaning from a "means of knowing" (intelligence) to a "purpose, decision, resolution." Within this spectrum it could denote a "judgment" or "disposition," or an "opinion" or "consent" (Liddell-Scott; cf. Moulton-Milligan). The concept of "will" or "purpose," also a dominant understanding, must not, however, be judged by the Greek concept that "knowing" (the basis for decision, judgment, etc.) rests essentially upon observation (Bultmann, "ginōskō," *Kittel*, 1:691; cf. pp.717f.).

**Gnome** - 9x in the NAS and translated consent(1), decided\*(1), judgment(1), opinion(3), purpose(3).

Acts 20:3; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 7:40; 2 Co. 8:10; Phlm. 1:14; Rev. 17:13; Rev. 17:17

**Robertson** - The Jews had heard of Paul's plan to sail for Syria and intended in the hurly-burly either to kill him at the docks in Cencreae or to push him overboard from the crowded pilgrim ship bound for the Passover. Fortunately Paul learned of their plot and so eluded them by going through Macedonia. The Codex Bezae adds here that "the Spirit bade him return into Macedonia."

**Return** ([5290](#))([hupostrepho](#) from **hupo** = under + **strepho** = to turn, to change) means to turn back from or to return (go back to a location).

**Acts 20:4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.**

NET Acts 20:4 Paul was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, and Timothy, as well as Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

GNT Acts 20:4 συνεπετο δε ατ Σπατρος Πρρου Βερροια ος, Θεσσαλονικων δε ρσταρχος και Σεκο νδος, και Γιος Δερβα ος και Τιμθεος, σιανο δε Τχικος και Τρφιμος.

NLT Acts 20:4 Several men were traveling with him. They were Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; Gaius from Derbe; Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

KJV Acts 20:4 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.

ESV Acts 20:4 Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus.

ASV Acts 20:4 And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Beroea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

CSB Acts 20:4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.

NIV Acts 20:4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

NKJ 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.

NRS Acts 20:4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia.

YLT Acts 20:4 And there were accompanying him unto Asia, Sopater of Berea, and of Thessalonians Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus, and of Asiatics Tychicus and Trophimus;

- **Sopater:** Ro 16:21, Sosipater
- **Berea:** Ac 17:10-12
- **Aristarchus:** Acts 19:29 27:2 Col 4:10+ Philemon 1:24
- **Gaius:** Ro 16:23 3Jn 1:1
- **Derbe:** Ac 14:6,20 2Co 8:23,24
- **Timotheus:** Acts 16:1 2Co 1:1,19 Php 2:19 1Ti 1:1 2Ti 1:2
- **Tychicus:** Eph 6:21 Col 4:7 2Ti 4:12 Tit 3:12
- **Trophimus:** Ac 21:29 2Ti 4:20
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A FEW FAITHFUL MEN

**AND HE WAS ACCOMPANIED:** What risk did they take? Acts 20:3 mentions a plot so there was certainly some concern that their lives were in physical danger. Note that these companions were all from cities he had visited during his missionary journeys.

**Arnold** has an interesting comment - Paul probably insisted that these men go with him to Jerusalem in order that there would be no mishandling of the funds taken up in the Gentile churches for the needy saints in Jerusalem. Everything for Paul was to be done openly and honestly with the upmost of integrity. The Greek text may help us here to see another reason these seven men were traveling with Paul. The word "**accompanied**" literally means "to stick with." These were seven alert young men, who hung around Paul and who Paul picked to travel with him so they could learn from him. Paul was discipling these men. Paul had a traveling seminary. He was giving them on-the-job training in the things of Christ. He was teaching them doctrine and showing them how to apply it by following his example. We could call them interns, for they were in training for the ministry. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**Steven Cole** comments regarding these faithful men that Paul's "strategy, as he explains to Timothy, was to entrust the things of God to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2). If you have known the Lord for any length of time, you should be asking God to bring into your life some men (or, women to women) who are younger in the Lord, to whom you can entrust the things God has taught you. Look for "FAT" men: Faithful, Available, and Teachable. If they are lacking any one of those qualities, you'll be wasting your time. They must be faithful in their walk with God. They must have the time to get together. They must have teachable hearts. If you are younger in the Lord, pray that God would link you with an older brother who could do with you as Paul did with these men, to equip you for service. ([Sermon](#))

**Guzik** suggests "These traveling companions of Paul were probably representatives from other churches who had sent money with Paul to Jerusalem. They were also present as ambassadors from the churches Paul has founded among the Gentiles, and were there to vouch for Paul's good stewardship in regard to the collection destined for Jerusalem." ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Cole** adds - Luke lists the names of the men who traveled with Paul (Acts 20:4). They were representatives of the various churches, entrusted with carrying their collection (which Paul had raised) to Jerusalem to help the poor believers there. ([Sermon](#))

**Accompanied** (4902)(**sunepomai** from **sun** = with, intimately with + **hepomai** = to follow) means follow along with, literally following them and figuratively complying with or being in accordance with. **Louw-Nida** - "to accompany someone, with explicit marking of association." Only use in the NT.

**Sopater of Berea** - only mention

**Aristarchus** - "the best ruler" ("aristocracy" - ruling class) Aristarchus as far as Rome - Acts 27:2; Col 4:10 (my fellow prisoner)

**Aristarchus** (708) whose name means "best ruler" was a Jewish believer (cp Col 4:10 and Col 4:11) had a Greek name and was a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 20:4; 27:2) who traveled with the Paul on his third missionary journey through Asia Minor (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2). **Aristarchus** first appeared during Paul's three year ministry at Ephesus. He was seized by the rioting mob, who recognized him as one of Paul's companions (Acts 19:29) and later preceded Paul to Troas (Acts 20:4-6). A faithful companion and friend, Aristarchus accompanied Paul on his return trip to Jerusalem (Acts 20:4), and on his voyage to Rome (Acts 27:4) where he attended the apostle and shared his imprisonment. As Paul writes Colossians, **Aristarchus** is still beside him.

**Secundus** (second or fortunate) - only mention. Secundus was a common name for a slave because they were often not called by their true names, and the first-ranking slave in a household would often be called Primus. The second-ranking slave was often called Secundus.

Notice the two representatives from Thessalonica - An Aristocrat and a Slave (presumably). In Col 3:1 [note](#) Paul describes "a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all."

**Gaius**, a Macedonian (Acts 19:29) who was Paul's host at Corinth when the Epistle to the Romans was written (Rom. 16:23) and was baptized with his household by Paul (1 Cor. 1:14). He accompanied Paul to Ephesus and was seized by the mob (Acts 19:29). The association of his name with that of Aristarchos seems to identify him with the Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4). The Apostle John addresses his third Epistle to someone by that name, but we do not know whether it is the same person or not.

**Vincent** disagrees as to his identity with Gaius in Acts 19:29 - Gaius. Not the one mentioned in Acts 19:29, who was a Macedonian.

**Timothy** - Personal name meaning, "honoring God." Friend and trusted coworker of Paul. When Timothy was a child, his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois taught him the Scriptures (2 Timothy 1:5 ; 2 Timothy 3:15 ). A native of Lystra, he may have been converted on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:6-23 ). Paul referred to Timothy as his child in the faith (1 Corinthians 4:17 ; 1 Timothy 1:2 ; 2 Timothy 1:2 ). This probably means that Paul was instrumental in Timothy's conversion. When Paul came to Lystra on his second journey, Timothy was a disciple who was well-respected by the believers (Acts 16:1-2 ). Paul asked Timothy to accompany him. Timothy's father was a Greek, and Timothy had not been circumcised. Because they would be ministering to many Jews and because Timothy's mother was Jewish, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3 ). Timothy not only accompanied Paul but also was sent on many crucial missions by Paul (Acts 17:14-15 ; Acts 18:5 ; Acts 19:22 ; Acts 20:4 ; Romans 16:21 ; 1 Corinthians 16:10 ; 2 Corinthians 1:19 ; 1 Thessalonians 3:2, 1 Thessalonians 3:6 ). For example, when Paul was unable to go to Corinth, he sent Timothy to represent Paul and his teachings (1 Corinthians 4:17 ). Later when Paul was in prison, he sent Timothy to Philippi (Philippians 2:19 ). Paul felt that no one had any more compassion and commitment than Timothy (Philippians 2:20-22 ). So close were Paul and Timothy that both names are listed as the authors of six of Paul's letters (2 Corinthians 1:1 ; Philippians 1:1 ; Colossians 1:1 ; 1 Thessalonians 1:1 ; 2 Thessalonians 1:1 ; Philippians 1:1 ). In addition, Paul wrote two letters to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2 ; 2 Timothy 1:2 ). As Paul's ministry neared the end, he challenged Timothy to remain true to his calling (1 Timothy 1:18 ). As Paul faced death, he asked Timothy to come to be with him (2 Timothy 4:9 ). At some point in his life, Timothy was imprisoned; but he was released (Hebrews 13:23). ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

**Timothy** mentioned 24 verses -

Acts 16:1; 17:14f; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom. 16:21; 1 Co. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Co. 1:1, 19; Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:2; Phlm. 1:1; Heb. 13:23

**Trophimus of Asia** (3x in the NT - Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Tim. 4:20) Personal name meaning, "nutritious." Gentile Christian from Ephesus who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem for the presentation of the collection (Acts 20:4-5 ; Acts 21:29 ). Paul's free association with Trophimus led to the false charge that Paul had defiled the Temple by bringing a Gentile within the Court of Israel (Acts 21:19 ). The Trophimus whom Paul left in Miletus (2 Timothy 4:20 ) is either another Trophimus or else evidence for a second Roman imprisonment. (According to Acts, Paul did not pass by Miletus on his way to Rome). (Ibid)

**Trophimus** went as far as Jerusalem Acts 21:29

**Tychicus** (5x - Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 3:12) - Personal name meaning, "fortunate." One of Paul's fellow workers in the ministry. A native of Asia Minor (Acts 20:4 ), he traveled with the apostle on the third missionary journey. Tychicus and Onesimus carried the Colossian letter from Paul (Colossians 4:7-9 ), and were to relate to the church Paul's condition. Paul also sent Tychicus to Ephesus on one occasion (2 Timothy 4:12 ) and possibly to Crete on another (Titus 3:12 ). Tradition holds that he died a martyr. (Ibid)

**NET Note on Asia** - In the NT "Asia" always refers to the Roman province of Asia, made up of about one-third of the west and

southwest end of modern Asia Minor. Asia lay to the west of the region of Phrygia and Galatia. The words “the province of” are supplied to indicate to the modern reader that this does not refer to the continent of Asia.

[Asia](#) in the NT ([map](#)) -

Acts 2:9; 6:9; 16:6; 19:10, 22, 26f; 20:4, 16, 18; 21:27; 24:18; 27:2; Rom. 16:5; 1 Co. 16:19; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:15; 1 Pet. 1:1; Rev. 1:4

### Acts 20:5 But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas.

NET Acts 20:5 These had gone on ahead and were waiting for us in Troas.

GNT Acts 20:5 ο τοι δ̄ προελθ̄ ντες̄ μενον̄ μ̄ ς̄ ν Τρ̄ δῑ,

NLT Acts 20:5 They went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

KJV Acts 20:5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

ESV Acts 20:5 These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas,

ASV Acts 20:5 But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas.

CSB Acts 20:5 These men went on ahead and waited for us in Troas,

NIV Acts 20:5 These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

NKJ Acts 20:5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.

NRS Acts 20:5 They went ahead and were waiting for us in Troas;

YLT Acts 20:5 these, having gone before, did remain for us in Troas,

- **Troas:** Troas was a maritime city and country of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, anciently called Dardania, lying on the [Hellespont](#), west of Mysia Ac 16:8,11 2Co 2:12 2Ti 4:13
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LUKE AGAIN ON THE SCENE

**And were waiting for us** - First person plural once again signifies Dr Luke has again personally joined the team, having joined on at Philippi. Supposedly Luke had remained in Philippi after Paul and Silas had been run out of town as suggested by Luke's use of “**they**” in Acts 17:1+.

**Darrell Bock** comments on the “**us**”/“**we**” sections of Acts - Internally for Acts, the most important authorship evidence involves the “**we**” sections (Bruce 1990, 3-5; Ellis 1974, 43-44; Hemer 1989, 312-34). They appear in Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16. Some have said their appearance seems to fall at random parts of Acts (Fitzmyer 1989, 1-26), but close examination reveals that this is not entirely the case, for each “**we**” text involves a sea trip. (Holman Apologetics Commentary on the Bible)

**Troas** ([see map](#))([another map](#))([Wikipedia](#)) (6x in the NT - Acts 16:8, 11; 20:5, 6; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:13) - A city in northwest Asia Minor visited by Paul during his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:8 ,Acts 16:8,16:11 ; Acts 20:5-6 ;2 Corinthians 2:12 ; 2 Timothy 4:13 ). Troas was founded before 300 B.C. by Antigonos, a successor of Alexander the Great and was located about ten miles south of the city of Troy. The emperor Augustus (31 B.C.-14 A.D.) made it a Roman colony. It served as an important seaport in the Roman Empire for those traveling between Asia Minor and Macedonia. Today (see [Wikipedia](#)), ruins of the city wall (about six miles in circumference), a theater, and an aqueduct remain.

**MacArthur** - The use of the pronouns “us” (Acts 20:5) and “we” (Acts 20:6) reveals that Luke was again Paul’s traveling companion, rejoining him at Philippi. Luke had apparently remained in that city after Paul and Silas had been forced to leave (

**A T Robertson** - Here again we have “**us**” (“**we**”) for the first time since Ac 16 (Acts 16:15, 16, 17) where Paul was with Luke in Philippi. Had Luke remained all this time in Philippi? We do not know, but he is with Paul now till Rome is reached. The seven brethren of Acts 20:4 went on ahead from Philippi to Troas while Paul remained with Luke in Philippi.

**Acts 20:6 We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days; and there we stayed seven days.**

NET Acts 20:6 We sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and within five days we came to the others in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

GNT Acts 20:6 με ς ὀ ξηπλε σαμεν μετ τ ς μ ρ α ς τ ν ζ μ ω ν π Φι λ π π ω ν κα λ θ ο μ ε ν π ρ ς α τ ο ς ε ς τ ν Τ ρ ὀ α χ ρ ι μ ε ρ ν π ν τ ε , π ο υ δ ι ε τ ρ ψ α μ ε ν μ ρ α ς π τ .

NLT Acts 20:6 After the Passover ended, we boarded a ship at Philippi in Macedonia and five days later joined them in Troas, where we stayed a week.

KJV Acts 20:6 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.

ESV Acts 20:6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

ASV Acts 20:6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we tarried seven days.

CSB Acts 20:6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread. In five days we reached them at Troas, where we spent seven days.

NIV Acts 20:6 But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

NKJ Acts 20:6 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.

NRS Acts 20:6 but we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

YLT Acts 20:6 and we sailed, after the days of the unleavened food, from Philippi, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days.

- **Philippi:** Ac 16:12 Php 1:1 1Th 2:2
- **the days :** Ac 12:3 Ex 12:14,15,18-20 13:6,7 23:15 34:18 1Co 5:7,8
- **came** 2Ti 4:13
- **seven:** Ac 21:4,8 28:14
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**We sailed from Philippi** - The plural pronoun indicates Luke had joined the group. Remember to follow along on the [Map above](#).

**After the days of unleavened bread (Passover)** Ex 12:17,18,20

See [Feast of Unleavened Bread](#)

**Utley** - This seven-day feast in mid-April was combined with the one-day Passover feast (cf. Ex 13). Paul's Jewish background influenced the way he viewed the calendar. We know nothing of Jews or a synagogue at Philippi, so Paul did not keep this feast for witnessing purposes (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19–23). Perhaps it is just mentioned because he was planning his travel to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost (cf. Acts 20:16). ([Acts 20 Notes](#))

**And came to them at Troas within five days:** In Acts 16:11,12 they made the voyage in two days. Probably adverse winds held them back here.

**And there we stayed seven days:** To atone for the short stay in Troas before 2 Co 2:12f. when Paul was so restless. Now he preaches a week to them.

**Arnold** - Notice also that they waited for seven days so they could meet with the Christians on the Lord's day. Apparently, the public meeting of the local church was very important for Paul and the early Christians. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**MacArthur** - Paul's persistence is another mark of his love for the church. In this passage, he modeled the persistence of love he wrote about in 1 Corinthians 13, where he described it as patient (1Cor 13:4+), enduring all things (1 Cor 13:7+), and never failing

(1Cor 13:8+). Love relentlessly, persistently pursues the good of others.

**A T Robertson** - Paul was a Jew, though a Christian, and observed the Jewish feasts, though he protested against Gentiles being forced to do it Ga 4:10; Col 2:16 Was Luke a proselyte because he notes the Jewish feasts as here and in Ac 27:9 He may have noted them merely because Paul observed them. But this passover was a year after that in Ephesus when Paul expected to remain there till Pentecost 1 Co 16:8 He was hoping now to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost Ac 20:16 as he did. We do not know the precise year, possibly A.D. 56 or 57.

**Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.**

NET Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul began to speak to the people, and because he intended to leave the next day, he extended his message until midnight.

GNT Acts 20:7 ὁ τῆς σαββάτων συνήγμων ἐκείνου ἡμερῶν, ὁ παρὰ τοῦ ἑξῆς ἡμερῶν ἐπιβὰς, ἡμερῶν ἐπιβὰς, ἡμερῶν ἐπιβὰς.

NLT Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, we gathered with the local believers to share in the Lord's Supper. Paul was preaching to them, and since he was leaving the next day, he kept talking until midnight.

KJV Acts 20:7 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.

ESV Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

ASV Acts 20:7 And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.

CSB Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread. Paul spoke to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he extended his message until midnight.

NIV Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

NKJ 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.

NRS Acts 20:7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight.

YLT Acts 20:7 And on the first of the week, the disciples having been gathered together to break bread, Paul was discoursing to them, about to depart on the morrow, he was also continuing the discourse till midnight,

- **the first day:** Joh 20:1,19,26 1Co 16:2 Rev 1:10
- **when we were gathered together:** 1Co 11:17-21,33,34
- **to break bread:** Ac 20:11 2:42,46 Lu 22:19 24:35 1Co 10:16 11:20-34
- **he prolonged his message until midnight:** Ac 20:9,11,31 28:23 Ne 8:3 9:3 1Co 15:10 2Ti 4:2
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK PARTAKING OF PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL FOOD**

**And on the first day of the week** -Sunday, the day the church gathered for worship, because it was the day of Christ's resurrection. Cf. Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2, 9; Lu 24:1; Jn 20:1, 19; 1Co 16:2. The writings of the early church Fathers confirm that the church continued to meet on Sunday after the close of the NT period. Scripture does not require Christians to observe the Saturday Sabbath:

- 1) the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant (Ex 31:16, 17; Neh 9:14; Eze 20:12), whereas Christians are under the New Covenant (2 Co 3; Heb 8);
- 2) there is no NT command to keep the Sabbath;

- 3) the first command to keep the Sabbath was not until the time of Moses (Ex 20:8);
- 4) the Jerusalem Council (chap15) did not order Gentile believers to keep the Sabbath;
- 5) Paul never cautioned Christians about breaking the Sabbath; and
- 6) the NT explicitly teaches that Sabbath keeping was not a requirement (Ro 14:5; Ga 4:10, 11; Col 2:16, 17).

- See John MacArthur's [sermon where he discusses the Sabbath](#).

**Constable** - This is the first clear reference in Scripture to the early Christians meeting to worship on the first day of the week rather than on the Sabbath, the seventh day (cf. John 20:19, 26; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10).

**Jack Arnold** - When Luke uses the term "first day of the week," he is reckoning time by the Roman calendar and not the Jewish calendar. The first day of the week was Sunday. This is the earliest unambiguous record for the Sunday meeting of the early church. At first the early church met every day in homes and on the Sabbath (seventh day) in the Temple. "And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart" (Acts 2:46). Over thirty years later, in Acts 10:7, we find the church settled on the first day of the week (Sunday) for their public worship. Other references make it clear that the church did meet on Sunday. "On the first day of every week let each one of you put aside and save, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2). Sunday was referred to by Christians as the Lord's Day. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet" (Rev. 1:10). My personal conviction is that Christians over a long period of time changed the official day of worship from Saturday to Sunday because it was on Sunday, the first day of the week, that Christ was raised from the dead. Christians meet on the first day because this is the day of resurrection. Each Lord's Day we celebrate the resurrection. Jesus Christ is alive, and every Christian recognizes this fact by gathering together in public worship on Sunday. Each Sunday is a fresh Easter. As individual Christians, we recognize Easter 365 days a year. As Christians collectively, we recognize Easter 52 weeks each year by meeting on Sunday. Another reason for changing the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday was that Christians wanted to stress a different day of worship because they were New Covenant Christians who had experienced the new spiritual creation in Christ. The Sabbath in the Old Testament has not changed. It is still Saturday. However, New Covenant Christians have changed in relation to the Sabbath of the Old Testament. The Sabbath is only connected with the Lord's Day in the New Covenant in principle. That is, the Lord's Day, Sunday, is a special day for rest, worship and spiritual activity. A Christian should try to do things on that day he does not do on other days of the week. The Lord's Day, therefore, should be given over to Christ in a way that other days of the week are not, even though everything done on the other days of the week should be under the Lordship of Christ. My personal conviction is that no New Covenant Christian is in any way a Sabbath keeper, but Sunday, according to the pattern of the Old Testament Sabbath, is to be for rest, worship and spiritual activity. We learn from this passage and from history that the early Christians met on Sunday night because the slaves and others had to work all day Sunday. They had long night meetings which lasted for four and five hours. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**Stanley Toussaint** - Luke's method of counting days here was not Jewish, which measures from sundown to sundown, but Roman, which counted from midnight to midnight. This can be stated dogmatically because "daylight" (Acts 20:11) was the next day (Acts 20:7). (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Steven Cole on Sabbath**- *The church met on Sunday*. This is the earliest clear reference to the custom of the church to gather on the first day of the week, rather than on the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday). Some scholars say that the meeting took place on what we would call Saturday night, since the Jews reckoned time from sundown to sundown. But others argue that Luke was using the Roman method, which started the day at midnight, as we do, in which case this church meeting took place on our Sunday night. This is supported by the fact that the text says that Paul intended to leave "the next day" (20:7), which is identified as "daybreak" (20:12). Under the Jewish reckoning, daybreak would be the same day as the previous night. Also, the chronology here requires that Paul left Troas on a Monday morning, not Sunday (William Ramsay, *St. Paul, the Traveller and the Roman Citizen* [Baker], pp. 289-290). Thus this all-night church meeting took place on Sunday night. You ask, "What difference does it make what day of the week the church meets on?" It makes a difference because the switch from Saturday to Sunday worship must have taken place because of the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb on Sunday morning. Why else would Jews, who largely made up the early Christian congregations and who had a God-given command and a centuries-long tradition of seventh-day worship, change to worshipping on the first day of the week? The only reasonable explanation is that the Lord Jesus, whom they worshiped, arose from the dead on that day. Thus the Sunday worship of the church is an evidence of and a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. Does this mean that Sunday is now the Christian Sabbath, and that Christians must follow the Jewish law regarding Sabbath observance? While there are differing views on this question (I disagree with some of my heroes, such as Charles Spurgeon, Hudson Taylor, and J. C. Ryle), I think that the Sabbath was the shadow that has now been fulfilled in Christ, the substance (Col. 2:16-17). He Himself is our "Sabbath rest" (Hebrews 4). The Sabbath command is the only one of the Ten Commandments not specifically repeated in the New

Testament. Although Paul warned the Gentile churches about many things, he never mentioned breaking the Sabbath. Neither did the Jerusalem Council impose Sabbath-keeping on the Gentile believers (Acts 15). (John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Acts 13-28* [Moody Press], pp. 202-203, lists ten reasons why Christians are not required to observe the Sabbath, some of which I have used here.) Although we are not under the Old Testament law regarding the Sabbath, I do believe that we should set aside the first day of every week ("the Lord's Day," Rev. 1:10; see also 1 Cor. 16:1) to gather with God's people for worship and instruction. Since Sunday was not a day off in the Roman Empire, and the slaves and others would have had to work, the church met on Sunday evening. We need to make it a priority to set apart time for gathering with the church on Sunday, and by doing so, we bear witness to the fact that our Savior is risen from the dead. ([Sermon](#))

**Henry Morris** - This is the first mention of the disciples meeting on the first day of the week, but this seems to have soon become a regular practice (see 1 Corinthians 16:2). For a considerable time, as long as he was welcome, Paul (presumably the others also) continued to meet and preach in the synagogues on the Sabbath day. However, as Jewish opposition became more virulent, this soon became impracticable. The last reference to this practice of meeting each sabbath day with the Jews in the synagogue is in reference to Ephesus (Acts 19:8). Paul was finally forced to move this synagogue next door to the school of Tyrannus (an odd name for a schoolmaster, unless it was a nickname given him by his students), where he preached every day. It seems likely that, during the period while the Jews and Christians would meet together each Sabbath day, the Christians would then want to meet by themselves the next day for fellowship and study (although there is no specific reference teaching this). However, this would normally be a workday, so they would probably have to wait until early evening to do so. This practice of meeting on the evening of the first day with the other disciples presumably then continued after they could no longer worship in the synagogue. This would also explain why Paul was preaching at Troas until midnight and why Eutychus fell asleep (Acts 20:9). The first day of the week then eventually became known as "the Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). By worshiping and resting on that day, the Christians were still keeping the sabbath ("sabbath" means "rest," not "seventh" or "Saturday") and also honoring the Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead on the first day of the week. He is both Creator and Redeemer, and now that He has completed both great works (Genesis 2:1-3; John 19:30), it is appropriate that we remember both together this way (Defender's Study Bible)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?](#)
- [How is Jesus our Sabbath Rest?](#)
- [What day is the Sabbath, Saturday or Sunday?](#)
- [Does God require Sabbath keeping of Christians?](#)
- [What is the Sabbath day?](#)
- [Why do Christians worship on Sunday?](#)
- [Why do some churches have a Sunday night/evening service?](#)

**When we were gathered together:** A formal meeting of the disciples. See this verb used for gatherings of disciples in Ac 4:31; 11:26; 14:27; 15:6,30;19:7,8; 1 Co 5:4 In Heb 10:25

**Jack Arnold** - In the first century, the church observed the Lord's Table in two phases--the Agape Feast and the Eucharist. Before the actual partaking of the elements of the Lord's Table, there was an Agape Feast (Love Feast) which was a supper (covered dish) at which time Christians fellowshiped together and shared food. This is why the Lord's Table is often referred to as the breaking of bread in the New Testament. Then there was the Eucharist which was a thanksgiving and religious observance of partaking of the bread and wine in remembrance of Christ, and this came after the Agape Feast. This verse teaches very clearly the importance of the Lord's Table. It was observed each Lord's Day. On this occasion in Acts, the local church at Troas was gathered not primarily to hear the Word taught, not to hear a great preacher or teacher, not to hear the choir or even to sing hymns, but to observe the Lord's Table. These Christians did not gather to be entertained or amused but to remember Christ through the breaking of bread. Why is the partaking of the Lord's Table so important for the Christian? The Bible says that when Christians are partaking of the Lord's Table they are sharing or fellowshiping with Christ in a way they cannot fellowship with Him in any other way. "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing (fellowship) in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing (fellowship) in the body of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:16)? Of course, the bread and wine are only symbols, and Christ is in no way present in the elements, not even in a spiritual sense. However, Christ is spiritually present to the believer's faith in a very special sense when partaking of the Lord's Table. There is some kind of special grace imparted to the believer when observing the Lord's Table, providing the Christian is in fellowship with his Lord. However, this grace is sanctifying grace and not saving grace. Therefore, the Lord's Table should always be observed with great respect and reverence, and it should never be a common exercise. The Lord's Table, however, does not always have to be taken in a quiet, somber, sanctimonious atmosphere, for it can be taken before, during or after a time of praise, joy and fellowship. Remember, the Lord's Table was always observed at the end of the Agape Feast in the New Testament, and almost always in the warm, casual environment of a home. One further note is that the New Testament seems to indicate that any group of Christians can partake of the Lord's Table without having an ordained minister

to administer the elements. The Lord's Table can be observed at home in small groups or at the church in a large group. It is, however, important for Christians to observe the Lord's Table on a regular basis in the local church. My personal preference would be to observe the Lord's Table every Sunday, according to the pattern of Acts 20:7. In Roman Catholic theology, the whole worship service, the mass, is centered around the Lord's Table and hardly any stress is placed upon the preached Word. In Protestant circles which today are largely liberal, there is little emphasis upon the Lord's Table or the preached Word. In evangelical circles, there is much emphasis upon the preached Word (praise God), but very little stress upon the Lord's Table. The ideal situation, biblically, is a gathering to observe the Lord's Table on every Lord's Day, and a solid preaching of the Word of God. The reason this was possible in the early church was that they met for four or five hours at a time. The three highlights of a Christian's life should be when: 1) He is partaking of Holy Communion; 2) He is hearing the preached Word, and 3) He is exercising his spiritual gifts in service for Christ. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**To break bread** - to celebrate the Agape ([love feast](#), or common meal—cf. 1 Cor 11:20–22) and communion. The language naturally bears the same meaning as in Acts 2:42.

**Barclay** - "In the early Church there were two closely related things. There was what was called the [Love Feast](#). To it all contributed, and it was a real meal. Often it must have been the only real meal that poor slaves got all week. It was a meal when the Christians sat down and ate in loving fellowship and in sharing with each other. During it or at the end of it the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed. It may well be that we have lost something of very great value when we lost the happy fellowship and togetherness of the common meal of the Christian fellowship. It marked as nothing else could the real homeliness, the real family spirit of the Church." (Daily Study Bible)

**Steven Cole** - Luke sums up their worship by stating that they gathered "to break bread," a reference to the Lord's Supper. Weekly observance is not commanded, but it did seem to be the custom of the early church. If we could throw away our clocks and not have to be concerned about getting one service over so that the next service can get started on time, I would like to have communion every Sunday. Communion points us to our Savior's supreme sacrifice for our sins on the cross. It makes us examine ourselves to make sure that we have confessed all of our sins against the Lord and against one another. It reminds us of the need to feed spiritually on Christ and to rely on His grace. It should cause our hearts to be drawn to Him in love and adoration.

**Paul began talking to them:** Imperfect tense - over and over he kept on talking at length.

**Jack Arnold** - Paul understood that the saints needed spiritual food as well as physical food, and the only way to grow in grace was through an understanding and application of the Bible. Paul undoubtedly taught them doctrine and then the application of that doctrine. He must have covered most every major point of theology for he went on right up to midnight. Paul is our example today. When we are preaching to Christians, our sermons should be longer in length and filled with doctrine and applications of that doctrine. Paul preached more than 15 minutes, and apparently these people loved the preached Word and were willing to sit by the hour to learn and apply God's Word. They did not leave at one minute after twelve noon because the preacher was not finished with his sermon as so many do today. People who like short sermons should remember the words of a great preacher who said, "**Sermonettes are for Christianettes.**" Some people say that "**a man who thinks by the inch and preaches by the yard ought to be dealt with by the foot.**" Paul would have been booted out of most churches today, evangelical and liberal. He would have been put out of liberal churches because of his solid Christian doctrine and out of evangelical churches for his methods and his love to preach the Word for hours at a time. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**Vincent** - Paul discoursed with them. It was a mingling of preaching and conference. Our word dialogue is derived from the verb.

**Talking** (1256) ([dialegomai](#) from **diá** = denoting transition or separation + **légo** = speak; English = dialogue; noun derived = **dialektos** = speaking a specific language of a country) means to engage in an interchange of speech. Some sources consider [dialegomai](#) to be a technical term for Paul's teaching in the synagogues. It is used of speaking to someone in order to convince them (by reasoning) (Heb 12:5). **Dialegomai** was used by classic Greek poets in a neutral sense (to hold a conversation, to chat), but Greek philosophers used [dialegomai](#) to mean conversation with teaching as its end.

**Dialegomai** in Acts - Acts 17:2; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:19; Acts 19:8; Acts 19:9; Acts 20:7; Acts 20:9; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:25

**Steven Cole** - Paul apparently preached in Troas for at least four hours, if not longer (until midnight)! Then, after the incident with Eutychus, he went back upstairs and talked with them (a different Greek word is used here, which indicates conversation) about the things of God until daybreak. Also, before Paul left Ephesus after the riot, he first *exhorted* the believers (Acts 20:1). Luke summarizes Paul's lengthy ministry in the districts around Macedonia by saying, "he had given them *much exhortation*" (Acts 20:2). As we saw in Acts 2:42, the early church devoted itself to the apostles' teaching. Our text does not require that every sermon be four hours long ("Whew!"). Someone has said that if you're going to preach for that long, you also have to be able to raise the dead, as Paul did! This was obviously a special occasion, the only time that this church could hear the apostle Paul; but they were willing to stay up all night to do it! It illustrates what Paul later strongly commanded Timothy, to preach the Word (2 Tim. 4:1-5). ([Sermon](#))

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment that "Paul did not stop with preaching; there was discussion, and he answered their questions." Wouldn't it be nice if we wanted to stay at church after the sermon and discuss it with the pastor and elders and ask questions and fellowship over the Word rather than flying out the door to make sure we don't miss the football game!

**Intending to depart the next day and he prolonged his message:** Paul was long winded but clearly engaging for the folks stayed! **Prolonged** is in the [imperfect tense](#) depicting Paul as over and over continuing with his message. The verb [dialegomai](#) meant an interchange, and after one interchange, he would continue speaking again. This is as vivid picture of his long sermon which went on and on until midnight. Paul knew he might never see these particular Christians again – so he preached for some six hours to them! He was redeeming the time allotted to him!

**Prolonged** (3905) (parateino from para = beside + teino = to stretch out) meaning to stretch beside or lengthwise, to prolong, to cause an event to continue beyond an expected period of time.

**Gilbrant** - This verb is common in classical Greek generally meaning "stretch out or along." It is used of time ("extend") or even of people ("stretch on the rack, torture") (cf. Liddell-Scott). Parateinō appears a few times in the Septuagint, usually in the sense of "extending" geopolitical borders (Genesis 49:13), vision (Numbers 23:28), or even merchandise (Ezekiel 27:13). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

### Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.

NET Acts 20:8 (Now there were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.)

GNT Acts 20:8 σαν ὁ λαμπ δες κανα ν τ περ ο μεν συνηγμ νοι.

NLT Acts 20:8 The upstairs room where we met was lighted with many flickering lamps.

KJV Acts 20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

ESV Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered.

ASV Acts 20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together.

CSB Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were assembled,

NIV Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.

NKJ Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

NRS Acts 20:8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting.

YLT Acts 20:8 and there were many lamps in the upper chamber where they were gathered together,

- **In the upper chamber** - Ac 1:13 Lu 22:12
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A SOPORIFIC ATMOSPHERE

Soporific means causing or tending to cause sleep.

**And there were many lamps:** **Many** (Sufficient), meaning enough (Lu 22:38). It was dark at night since the full moon (passover) was three weeks behind. These lamps were probably filled with oil and had wicks that flickered and smoked. This may have contributed to Eutychus falling asleep - the room was stuffy, smoky and oxygen levels might not have been optimal.

**Vincent on many lamps** - A detail showing the vivid impression of the scene upon an eye-witness. It has been remarked that the abundance of lights shows how little of secrecy or disorder attached to these meetings.

**Disciple's Study Bible** - The hour was late; the sermon long; lamps were heating the room. Eutychus sat in a window, went to sleep, and fell to the ground from the third story. Now everyone was awake and supposed Eutychus to be dead. Paul reassured the crowd, "He's alive." It is not certain Dr. Luke considered this a miracle of restoration to life--perhaps the young man was merely knocked unconscious. Then the miracle was preservation of life. The crowd rejoiced in his well-being. They had seen God at work.

**In the upper room - Upper room** in the Bible - 1 Ki. 17:19; 1 Ki. 17:23; Neh. 3:31; Neh. 3:32; Mk. 14:15; Lk. 22:12; Acts 1:13; Acts

**We were gathered together** - This is the verb sunago which gives us our word "Synagogue." ([sunagoge](#))

**Gathered together** (assembled)(4863)([sunago](#) from **sun** = with + **ago** = to lead) means literally to lead together. To gather (in) or gather (up) , bring or call together, gather. Sunago is the root of "[synagogue](#)."

**Acts 20:9 And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep; and as Paul kept on talking, he was overcome by sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.**

NET Acts 20:9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, was sinking into a deep sleep while Paul continued to speak for a long time. Fast asleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead.

GNT Acts 20:9 καθεζόμενος ὁ τις νεανίας ἐν ἑνὶ τῶν θυρῶν, καταφερόμενος ἐν βαθεῖ διαλεγόμενου τοῦ Παύλου ἐπιπλεόν, κατενεχθεὶς ἐπὶ τὸ πνυοῦ πέσεν ἐπὶ τὸ τρίτον οἴκου κτωκάρῃ νεκρῶς.

NLT Acts 20:9 As Paul spoke on and on, a young man named Eutychus, sitting on the windowsill, became very drowsy. Finally, he fell sound asleep and dropped three stories to his death below.

KJV Acts 20:9 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.

ESV Acts 20:9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

ASV Acts 20:9 And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead.

CSB Acts 20:9 and a young man named Eutychus was sitting on a window sill and sank into a deep sleep as Paul kept on speaking. When he was overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead.

NIV Acts 20:9 Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.

NKJ 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.

NRS Acts 20:9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead.

YLT Acts 20:9 and there was sitting a certain youth, by name Eutychus, upon the window -- being borne down by a deep sleep, Paul discoursing long -- he having sunk down from the sleep, fell down from the third story, and was lifted up dead.

- **sinking into a deep sleep:** Jon 1:5,6 Mt 26:40,41 Mk 13:36
- **fell down from the third floor:** 1Ki 17:19
- **nd was picked up dead:** Acts 14:19 Mk 9:26
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## EUTYCHUS DROPS OUT OF PAUL'S CLASS

**And there was a certain young man named Eutychus:** Young man (meanias) often describes a young boy from 8-14 years old, although meanias was not always used that precisely in the New Testament (Mt 2:16). **Eutychus** was a common slave name which ironically means "**fortunate!**" (after this event they probably nicknamed him '**Lucky!**') and proved to be true to his name! It was

"fortunate" that he fell off in the presence of a man of God who had the power to bring him back to life!

**Sitting on the window sill:** (thuris - window, small opening in a wall - Acts 20:9, 2 Cor 11:33) An early version of a "back row Baptist!" Latticed window (no glass) opened because of the heat from the lamps and the crowd. Ahaziah "fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber" became ill and eventually died. (2 Ki 1:2-4)

**Vincent on window sill** - The windows of an Eastern house are closed with lattice-work, and usually reach down to the floor, resembling a door rather than a window. They open, for the most part, to the court, and not to the street, and are usually kept open on account of the heat.

**Sinking into a deep sleep:** *Katapheromai hupno* is an idiom meaning literally "to be carried away by sleep." The [present tense](#) describes Eutychus as gradually going into a deep sleep. We've all been to boring meetings and done the same thing. We can picture him nodding off and waking momentarily, only to nod off again (You've never done that have you?) Medical writers use **bathus** (deep) with [hupnos](#) as we do today (*deep sleep* - "REM" SLEEP). Eutychus struggled bravely to keep awake, vainly hoping that Paul would finish.

**Sinking** (2702)(**kataphero** from **kata** = down + **phero** = bear) means to literally to bear or carry down from a higher to a lower place, to bring down with violence, overthrow. In NT, it is only in the passive voice meaning be borne or thrown down or to fall. In Acts 25:7 the people "laid (cast) many and grievous complaints against Paul," implying that the charges were "brought forward" or "laid down."

**Gilbrant on kataphero** - It was used by Homer and other classical writers to mean "bring down, fall down, pull down," as well as to mean "fall or drop asleep" (cf. Liddell-Scott). *Katapherō* appears in later Greek literature also. In most cases it has the meaning of "bringing down." This word occurs 15 times in the Septuagint. Five of these times it translates *yāradh* ("cause to go down, bring," etc.), having the same basic meaning as in the classical period. A second meaning of "flowing, gushing, or pouring out" is seen in 2 Samuel 14:14 and Micah 1:4, both times translating the Hebrew *nāgar*. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Kataphero** - Three NT uses - Acts 20:9; Acts 25:7 ("**bringing...against**"); Acts 26:10 ("I **cast** my vote **against** them.")

**Kataphero in Septuagint** -

Gen. 37:2; Deut. 1:25; Deut. 22:14; Jdg. 7:4; Jdg. 7:5; Jdg. 16:21; 2 Sam. 14:14; 1 Ki. 1:53; Isa. 17:13; Isa. 28:2; Ezek. 47:2; Dan. 5:20; Mic. 1:4;

**Vincent on Sinking into a deep sleep - Kataphero** is Lit., borne down by, etc. A common Greek phrase for being overcome by sleep. In medical language the verb was more frequently used in this sense, absolutely, than with the addition of sleep. In this verse the word is used twice: in the first instance, in the present participle, denoting the coming on of drowsiness—falling asleep; and the second time, in the aorist participle, denoting his being completely overpowered by sleep. Mr. Hobart thinks that the mention of the causes of Eutychus' drowsiness—the heat and smell arising from the numerous lamps, the length of the discourse, and the lateness of the hour—are characteristic of a physician's narrative. Compare Luke 22:45.

**Sleep** (5258)([hupnos](#)) describes a usually natural and periodic state of rest during which consciousness of one's surroundings is suspended and often a time when dreams occur. Most uses in the NT speak of literal sleep but in Ro 13:11 *hupnos* figuratively describes spiritual sleep, so in view of the fact that Jesus' return is closer today than the day we first believed we need to "awaken from sleep (spiritual stupor)."

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, are you a sleepy believer? Is your preaching or teaching somnolence inducing? The church in America is largely "hypnotized" by the passing pleasures of worldliness and one can hardly even discern the difference in what many so-called Christians watch, buy, etc when compared to rank unbelievers.

**J Vernon McGee** - "I confess that Paul's experience has always been a comfort to me. When I look out at the congregation and see some brother or sister out there sound asleep, I say to myself, 'It's all right. Just let them sleep. Paul put them to sleep, too.'"

**Hughes adds** - It is comforting for any preacher to think that people might fall asleep during the preaching of even the Apostle Paul. Yet, Paul taught for many hours and after a long day of work for most of his audience. There is also some evidence that Eutychus *fought* the sleep the best he could: "The tenses of the Greek verbs portray poor Eutychus as being gradually overcome despite his struggle to remain awake. Yet in the end, sleep got the best of him: "The word translated 'sleep' is the word from which we derive our English word *hypnosis*." (Preaching the Word - Acts)

**And as Paul kept on talking:** The present tense pictures this as going on and on. For [Talking](#) see notes on [dialegomai](#)

**He was overcome:** The causes of the drowsiness of Eutychus (the heat, the crowd, the smell of the lamps, the late hour, the long discourse). Cf. Lu 22:45

**Overcome** is same word [kataphero](#) translated above as **sinking**.

**Deep sleep and fell down from the third floor.** From treis (three) and stegê (roof), adjective tristegos having three roofs.

**Bob Deffinbaugh** - When I was in Jr. High School, we had a fellow fall asleep in our class. As I remember, the teacher decided to teach the student a lesson by having the class silently slip out at the end of the period. The next class was also instructed to slip into their seats quietly. The student slept peacefully on—until about half way through the next period. Everyone was waiting and watching for him to wake up, which he did, of course. He opened his eyes, looked around the class, and came to the realization that it was another class, and not his own. He quietly gathered up his books and left class, as inconspicuously as possible. Sleeping in class has happened for centuries. In our text, we are told of a young man named Eutychus, who fell asleep during Paul's lengthy sermon, and then fell three stories down to his death. As you know, this young man was raised to life, and so the story is a happy one in the end. I am inclined to entitle the section which describes the death and raising of Eutychus, "Eutychus Drops Out of Paul's Class." (Ed: Source of my title to this section) It is indeed an interesting story, and in time I believe we will see why the story was included in Luke's account. It would be an amusing exercise to swap "falling asleep in church" stories this morning. I only wish that there was time. Over the years I have seen a few of you fall asleep. I am frankly tempted to use this account as a proof text for lengthy sermons. A. T. Robertson makes this comment about Paul's extended sermon: "Paul's purpose to leave early next morning seemed to justify the long discourse. Preachers usually have some excuse for the long sermon which is not always clear to the exhausted audience." But I am afraid that if I did preach any longer you would insist that I would have to be able to raise the dead, like Paul, or at least promise to leave the following day. ([Paul's Parting Words](#))

**And was picked up dead:** The people considered him dead and Luke the physician seems to agree with that view. Peter had earlier raised Tabitha to life (Acts 9:40). Now Paul raises Eutychus. Luke on a number of occasions draws parallels between the ministries of the two apostles to show God's blessing was equally upon both. Liberal theologians, attempting to explain away the supernatural, suggest that this man was not actually dead but was stunned from the fall. Paul merely gave him mouth to mouth resuscitation and he was revived. However, the Bible says he was dead, and Luke, being a doctor, confirmed his death. What we have here is supernatural phenomena.

**Picked up** ([142](#))([airo](#)) literally means to lift up something (a dead body Mt 14:12) and to carry it (Lxx - Ge 44:1, Ex 25:28 = the Ark).

**Vincent on dead** - Actually dead. Not as dead, or for dead. (Col 4:14 - Luke a physician should clearly know dead from just knocked unconscious! This is a miracle!)

**Darrell Bock - Eutychus** was killed by the fall. Paul's remark in Acts 20:9 is similar to what Jesus said just before he raised Jairus's daughter from the dead but described her condition as sleep when he spoke to the gathered crowd (Mark 5:39). It was a way of saying that death would not be the final outcome. Paul's embracing Eutychus recalls the acts of Elijah and Elisha in 1 Kings 17:19-21 and 2 Kings 4:34-35. It also parallels acts by Peter (Dorcas in Acts 9:36-41) and Jesus (Luke 7:11-15: widow of Nain's son; 8:49-56: Jairus's daughter; John 11:38-44: Lazarus). (Ibid)

**J Vernon McGee** - A friend of mine who preached up in the country of middle Tennessee invited me to come there to hold some meetings in his church. In the summertime they would have quite protracted meetings at this Bible conference. It was interesting that in the back of the church there was a place for several pallets. When a little fellow would go to sleep, the mother holding him would simply get up and take him to the back of the room and put him down on the pallet. When another little fellow would go to sleep, his mother would get up with him and do the same thing. There would be six or more children asleep in the back of that church. One night after several mothers had put their children down on the pallet, my friend interrupted his message and remarked, "I'm a better preacher than the apostle Paul! Paul preached until midnight and he put only one to sleep. I'm preaching here until about nine o'clock and I've already put four to sleep!"

**Acts 20:10 But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him."**

NET Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, put his arms around him, and said, "Do not be distressed, for he is still alive!"

GNT Acts 20:10 καταβ ε δ Πα λος π πεσεν α τ κα συμπεριλαβ ν ε πεν, Μ θορυβε σθε, γ ρ ψυχ α το ν α τ στιν.

NLT Acts 20:10 Paul went down, bent over him, and took him into his arms. "Don't worry," he said, "he's alive!"

KJV Acts 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his

life is in him.

ESV Acts 20:10 But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."

ASV Acts 20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him.

CSB Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, fell on him, embraced him, and said, "Don't be alarmed, for his life is in him!"

NIV Acts 20:10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"

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

NRS Acts 20:10 But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him."

YLT Acts 20:10 And Paul, having gone down, fell upon him, and having embraced him, said, 'Make no tumult, for his life is in him;'

- **fell upon him**, : 1Ki 17:21,22 2Ki 4:34,35
- **Do not be troubled**: Mt 9:24 Mk 5:39 Lu 7:13 Joh 11:11,40
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **"FORTUNATE" RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD**

Recall **Eutychus** means "**Fortunate!**"

**But Paul went down and fell upon him:** This miracle is reminiscent of those performed by Elijah and Elisha...

### ELIJAH RAISES A DEAD SON

Now it came about after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became sick; and his sickness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. So she said to Elijah, "What do I have to do with you, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my iniquity to remembrance and to put my son to death!" He said to her, "Give me your son." Then he took him from her bosom and carried him up to the upper room where he was living, and laid him on his own bed. He called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought calamity to the widow with whom I am staying, by causing her son to die?" Then he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray You, let this child's life return to him." (1 Ki 17:17-21)

### ELISHA RAISES A DEAD SON

When Elisha came into the house, behold the lad was dead and laid on his bed. So he entered and shut the door behind them both and prayed to the LORD. And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth and his eyes on his eyes and his hands on his hands, and he stretched himself on him; and the flesh of the child became warm. Then he returned and walked in the house once back and forth, and went up and stretched himself on him; and the lad sneezed seven times and the lad opened his eyes. He called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Take up your son." Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out. (2 Ki 4:32-37)

**And after embracing him he said, "Do not be troubled:** ([present imperative with a negative](#)). Stop making a noise ([thorubos](#)) as the people did on the death of Jairus's daughter Mt 9:23 and Mk 5:38. These are the words of a man who has great faith in his great God. (Cf the words of Jesus - John 14:1, John 14:27)

**THOUGHT-** O, to be so in tune with the Almighty in all the challenging circumstances of life. In Jesus' Name. Amen. I call these "divine pop tests" and all too often fail them with a fast fleshly response.

**Troubled** ([2350](#))([thorubeo](#) from [thorubos](#) = noise of a tumult) means to throw into disorder, to disturb, set in an uproar, start a

riot (Acts 17:5). In the middle (or passive) voice **thorubeo** means to be troubled, to be upset, be alarmed, be in commotion and make a disturbance, especially noise associated with lamenting of the dead (Mt 9:23, Mk 5:39, Acts 20:10). The preceding references are all the NT uses - Usage: make a commotion(1), noisy disorder(1), set(1), troubled(1), uproar(1).

**Gilbrant - Thorubeō** is used in classical Greek especially of crowds who “make noise.” The character of the “uproar” might be either positive—“applause, approbation”—or negative —“clamor, tumult.” It could also refer to a “disturbance” of any kind. Its relatively sparse use in the Septuagint (five times—three canonical) accords with classical Greek (Wisdom of Solomon 18:19 of “disturbing” dreams; cf. Sirach 40:6; Daniel 8:17 of a “terrifying” vision), except for its use in Judges 3:26 where the Septuagint interprets the delay as a period of “distress.” (Ibid0

Lxx uses are found in Jdg 3:26, Nah 2:4, Da 8:17. Secular example from Moulton and Milligan - “do not be disturbed however, for when you come you will know what it means”

**Vincent on Do not be troubled** - more correctly, *make ye no ado*. They were beginning to utter passionate outcries. See Matt. 9:23; Mark 5:39.

**Criswell** - Peter had earlier raised Tabitha to life (9:40). Now Paul raises Eutychus. Luke on a number of occasions draws parallels between the ministries of the two apostles to show God's blessing was equally upon both. (Believer's Study Bible)

**Tannenhill** - “Whereas Peter raises Tabitha by a command, following the pattern of resurrection stories in Luke, Paul ‘fell upon (epepesen)’ Eutychus and embraced him and then announced that he was alive (Acts 20:10). If there is a healing act here, it is by bodily contact, not by word, and follows the pattern of the Elisha story (2 Kings 4:34). Peter and Paul are similar in part because they fit a common scriptural type. Through both, the prophetic power of Elijah and Elisha continues to be available to the church.” ([The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts, Vol 2](#))

**For his life is in him:** This language is relied on by Ramsay, Wendt, Zoeckler to show that Eutychus had not really died, but had merely swooned. Paul's language would suit that view, but it suits equally well the idea that he had just been restored to life and so is indecisive. One will believe here as the facts appeal to him.

**Vincent on his life is in him** - In the same sense in which Christ said, “The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth” (Luke 8:52).

**Cole** makes an excellent point - The almost casual way that Luke describes such a stupendous miracle makes some wonder if the boy had actually died, or whether Paul just resuscitated him. I think that we should take Dr. Luke's medical description, that he was dead. But in the context, Luke de-emphasizes the miracle by sandwiching it between Paul's sermon and his talking with the church on through the night afterwards. He seems to be making the point that it is the teaching of God's Word, not amazing miracles, that will sustain and strengthen the church. The main task of a shepherd is to feed the flock (Ezek. 34:2). The trend in our day of “user-friendly” churches is to shorten the sermon into 15-minute sound bytes, since the younger generation has been reared on TV and can't handle a longer discourse. But as J. Vernon McGee used to say, “Sermonettes produce Christianettes.” The church needs solid food from the Word to be healthy. ([Acts 20:1-16 How One Man Changed the World](#))

**Deffinbaugh** adds “Why is so little emphasis put on this miracle? Why is it passed over so quickly? Because this was not Paul's priority. Paul is instrumental in the raising of the lad, but it was not his main interest. Paul was intent on teaching these folks, so much so that when the boy was raised to life, he quickly went back upstairs to observe communion and to teach more, for the rest of the night (verse 11). It is almost as though Paul looked at his watch and said, “Oh my, we have just lost 20 minutes of teaching time, let's quickly go upstairs and break bread and then I have some more things which I need to teach you before I leave.” Why do both Paul and Luke give this miracle “second place” status? Many seem to think that Acts is a book of miracles, and that this book is our basis for assuming that God not only can but will work miracles on a daily basis. When one reads the Book of Acts carefully, you find that the book records fewer miracles than we might expect—fewer miracles than actually occurred. I believe that both Luke and Paul were firmly convinced that while miracles would come and go, but that the Word of God would be eternal. I believe that both were convinced that while miracles will not sustain faith, the Word of God will. This is why Paul and Luke deal briefly with the miracle and deal emphatically with the teaching. Faith is not based upon what is seen (miracles, for example), but on the Word of God (see Hebrews 11). Thus miracles will not sustain our faith, but the Word of God will. And thus we see the sense of urgency of Paul with regard to the need to teach these saints. Shortly after they began to meet (it would seem) Paul began speaking to them, knowing that his departure was on the following day. He knew he had only a little time, but much to say (see verse 7). Because of the shortness of his time with them, Paul extended his teaching until midnight (verse 7). It was because of Paul's lengthy teaching and because of the many lamps in that room that Eutychus fell asleep and from the window to his death (verses 8-9). When Eutychus was raised to life, Paul went back upstairs, eager to continue on with his teaching, throughout the night. ([Acts 20:1-38 Preparation for Pentecost](#))

**Marshall** - Paul's comment that the boy's *life* was *in him* refers to his condition after he had ministered to him. Luke would not have devoted space to the raising up of somebody who was merely apparently dead. (TNTC-Acts)

**Jack Arnold** has some interesting thoughts on divine healing - Paul had the sign-gift of miracles which has apparently passed out of existence today. No one is raising the dead today. However, there is divine healing through individual prayers, and through the anointing of oil and the prayers of the elders. "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him" (James 5:14, 15). All Christians should live in expectancy of the supernatural in healing. God is still delivering men from sickness today, not through faith-healers, but through believing prayer. Some time ago, I preached a message on James 5:14, 15. Since that time several people have called the elders and the elders have anointed them with oil and prayed for them. We prayed for Doug Shackelford, and he experienced amazing recovery from lung surgery for a man 66 years old. We prayed for Judy Rossbacher that God would stop her bleeding and she would not lose her twins and her pregnancy would be blessed of God. The very next day Judy began to show improvement. She had taken hormone shots but, until the time of prayer, they were not taking effect. The elders have also prayed over Ken Swisher for a mass around his liver. Ken says that he has had no real pain since the time we laid hands on him. While he still had some infection in his liver, two canals (tubes) were opened up in his body without any medicine and this occurred sometime after we anointed him with oil and prayed. God is still healing today through prayer. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [Who was Eutychus in the Bible?](#)
- [How many people were raised from the dead in the Bible?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about healing?](#)
- [What is a healing room? Are healing rooms biblical?](#)
- [What is the spiritual gift of healing?](#)
- [Why doesn't God heal everyone?](#)
- [Is raising the dead still possible today?](#)
- [How many people were raised from the dead in the Bible?](#)

**Acts 20:11 When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he talked with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.**

NET Acts 20:11 Then Paul went back upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he talked with them a long time, until dawn. Then he left.

GNT Acts 20:11 ναβ ς δ κα κλ σας τ ν ρτον κα γευσ μενος φ καν ν τε μιλ σας χρι α γ ς, ο τως ξ λθεν.

NLT Acts 20:11 Then they all went back upstairs, shared in the Lord's Supper, and ate together. Paul continued talking to them until dawn, and then he left.

KJV Acts 20:11 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.

ESV Acts 20:11 And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed.

ASV Acts 20:11 And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

CSB Acts 20:11 After going upstairs, breaking the bread, and eating, Paul conversed a considerable time until dawn. Then he left.

NIV Acts 20:11 Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.

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

NRS Acts 20:11 Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left.

YLT Acts 20:11 and having come up, and having broken bread, and having tasted, for a long time also having talked -- till daylight, so he went forth,

- **When he had gone back up:** Acts 20:7

- **until daybreak:** Acts 20:7,9
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BACK TO BREAKING BREAD AND SPEAKING OF THE BREAD OF LIFE

**And when he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten** - "From the court to the chamber above." (Vincent) The breaking of **the bread** could refer to an ordinary meal or could refer to the Lord's Supper. Now this is a man who has set his face like flint to preach the word! O how we need his tribe to increase in America!

**He talked** (3656) (**homileo** from **hómilos** = a multitude, a crowd or company - English [homiletics](#) = art of preaching) means to be in company with, and by implication to converse, commune, talk. **Vine homileo** "signifies to be in company, to associate with any one; hence, to have intercourse with."

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek the term **homileō** has a variety of usages. Its basic usage is to portray being in company with someone or something. From this basic sense several nuances in meaning can be seen. It is used in a hostile sense when referring to being in battle with an enemy. It is used of social intercourse, sexual intercourse, as well as business interactions. In a physical sense, it refers to plaster being in contact with something. (For specific examples of the above uses, see Liddell-Scott.) The Septuagint's use of **homileō** is limited to Proverbs where the term denotes "to talk with" or "to converse" (see Pr 15:12; 23:31). In one passage the context suggests the connotation of "to have sexual intercourse" (Pr 5:19). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

As an aside in the Greek New Testament, there are several verbs which are translated "speak" = **légō** (3004), to say; **laléō** (2980), to speak; **eréō** (2046) and **homiléō** (3656), to discourse; and **phēmi** (5346), to make one's thoughts known, to speak or say, from which the words "prophet" (**prophētēs** [4396]) and "prophesy" **prophēteuō** [4395]) are derived.

**Homileo** - 4x in 4v - Usage: converse(1), talked(1), talking(2).

Luke 24:14 And they were **talking** with each other about all these things which had taken place. 15 While they were **talking** and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them.

Acts 20:11 When he had gone back up and had broken the bread and eaten, he **talked** with them a long while until daybreak, and then left.

Acts 24:26 At the same time too, he was hoping that money would be given him by Paul; therefore he also used to send for him quite often and **converse** with him.

**Vincent on talked** - Rather, communed. It denotes a more familiar and confidential intercourse than discoursed, in Acts 20:7.

**With them a long while until daybreak, and then left.** : As **MacArthur** says "Paul was about to leave on a long, difficult journey, yet his love for the church made him available as long as the members needed him. Giving no thought to his own need for rest, he used every available minute to teach the believers at Troas. As verse 11 indicates, Paul kept at it until it was time for him to leave." (Acts Commentary)

I doubt if anyone fell asleep the rest of the night! They were listening to a man who had just been used by God to bring about a miracle! Talk about having a "sermon illustration" to draw in your congregation!!!

**J Vernon McGee** - "I tell congregations very frankly that I'm a long-winded preacher. I'm known as that. I love to teach the Word of God. I have a system of homiletics that I never learned in the seminary. I picked it up myself—in fact, I got it from a cigarette commercial. This is it: It's not how long you make it but how you make it long. I believe in making it long; my scriptural authority for it is that Paul did it. He spoke until midnight [really until daybreak, v. 11]....These early believers sat up all night listening to Paul. I know someone is going to say, 'If I could listen to Paul, I'd listen all night, too.' Probably Paul was nothing more than a humble preacher of the gospel. We do know that Apollos was an eloquent man, but that is not said of Paul. These believers simply wanted to hear the Word of God. How wonderful that is!" ([Acts 20 Commentary](#))

**Jack Arnold** has some interesting thoughts on body life - After the raising of Eutychus, Paul and the other Christians went back into the upper chamber and had a common meal (a 2:00 a.m. snack). These Christians spent the whole night enjoying body life, which is the life of the body of believers in Christ sharing the life of Christ. They were conversing with one another, fellowshiping together around Christ and sharing each other's experiences. What an exciting time this must have been, and this certainly sets a precedent for all night praise and prayer services for Christians. Paul was having such a wonderful time that he could not tear himself away from his fellow Christians, even though he had a long walk ahead of him the next day. All Christians must have body life in order to be healthy, normal Christians, for we all need to build, encourage, and exhort one another to practical godliness of life. "And they took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted." -- During the sharing time much of the conversation centered around

Eutychus who was raised from the dead. This, of course, strengthened and comforted the Christians. ([Acts 20:1-12 New Testament Practices](#))

**Criswell** - They treasured every moment with God's people. Sleep was secondary to insights gained through Christ's grace. This incident further illustrates early Christian fellowship. They ate and talked until morning. They treasured every moment with God's people. Sleep was secondary to insights gained through Christ's grace. (Believers Study Bible)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Perhaps each of us should ask ourselves, "What really keeps me awake?" Christians who slumber during one hour in church somehow manage to stay awake during early-morning fishing trips, lengthy sporting events and concerts, or late-night TV specials. Also, we need to prepare ourselves physically for public worship to make sure we are at our best. "Remember," said Spurgeon, "if we go to sleep during the sermon and die, there are no apostles to restore us!" ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

### Acts 20:12 They took away the boy alive, and were greatly comforted.

NET Acts 20:12 They took the boy home alive and were greatly comforted.

GNT Acts 20:12 γαγον δ τ ν πα δα ζ ντα κα παρεκλ θησαν ο μετρ ως.

NLT Acts 20:12 Meanwhile, the young man was taken home unhurt, and everyone was greatly relieved.

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

ESV Acts 20:12 And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted.

ASV Acts 20:12 And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

CSB Acts 20:12 They brought the boy home alive and were greatly comforted.

NIV Acts 20:12 The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

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

NRS Acts 20:12 Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.

YLT Acts 20:12 and they brought up the lad alive, and were comforted in no ordinary measure.

- **They took away the boy alive:** Ac 20:10
- **were greatly comforted:** Isa 40:1 2Co 1:4 Eph 6:22 1Th 3:2 4:18 5:11,14 2Th 2:16
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FORTUNATE TO LIVE!

**They took away the boy alive:** This implies Eutychus may have still been a bit dazed and confused.

**Greatly** (3756)(**metrios**) means moderately, but in this sentence is preceded with the strong negative ou (absolute negation) which is more literally not a little, immeasurably, exceedingly, greatly or much. **Robertson** notes that "Luke is fond of this use of the figure [litotes](#) (use of the negative) instead of the strong positive Acts 1:5."

**Comforted** (3870)(**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** [ [word study](#) ] = call) conveys the basic idea of calling one alongside to help or give aid. In the present case in a sense the meaning of parakaleo proved to be literally true as "**Paul went down and fell upon him.**"

**Henry Morris** - Only one other example of miraculous restoration to life through an apostle is cited, that of Tabitha through Peter. This is the last such instance recorded in Scripture before the Second Coming of Christ.

Now in Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity, which she continually did. And it came about at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us." So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the **upper room** (Ed: a number of interesting things occurred in the "upper room" in Acts Acts 1:13, Acts 20:8, cp

Lk 22:12!) ; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he (Peter) gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. (Acts 9:38-41+)

**Acts 20:13 But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had arranged it, intending himself to go by land.**

NET Acts 20:13 We went on ahead to the ship and put out to sea for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for he had arranged it this way. He himself was intending to go there by land.

GNT Acts 20:13 με ς δ̄ προελθ ντες π τ πλο ον ν χθημεν π τ ν σσον κε θεν μ λλοντες ναλαμβ νειν τ ν Πα λον· ο τως γ ρ διατεταγμ νος ν μ λλων α τ ς πεζε ειν.

NLT Acts 20:13 Paul went by land to Assos, where he had arranged for us to join him, while we traveled by ship.

KJV Acts 20:13 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.

ESV Acts 20:13 But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land.

ASV Acts 20:13 But we going before to the ship set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land.

CSB Acts 20:13 Then we went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there. For these were his instructions, since he himself was going by land.

NIV Acts 20:13 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot.

NKJ 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.

NRS Acts 20:13 We went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there; for he had made this arrangement, intending to go by land himself.

YLT Acts 20:13 And we having gone before unto the ship, did sail to Assos, thence intending to take in Paul, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go on foot;

- **intending himself to go by land** Mk 1:35 6:31-33,46
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE JOURNEY CONTINUES FROM TROAS TO MILETUS

Remember to follow along on the [Map above](#).

Recall from Acts 20:7 Paul had planned "to leave (Troas) the next day" but remained in Troas longer. In order to make up for this delay, Paul sent Luke and the rest of the party on by ship and he would go by land as the route over land was much shorter than by sea. This would give him a some time to prolong his stay at Troas.

**Jack Arnold** comments that "What we have in Acts 20:13-38 is a record of the first pastors' conference ever held. At this conference, the Apostle Paul gathered the elders (pastors) of the Church of Ephesus together and gave them final instructions as to how to lead the Christians in Ephesus in his absence from them. This is a very important passage for elders and it should be mastered by all Christians so as to have an effective functioning local church. Also, what Paul says about his own ministry is to be applied directly to men who are elders of a local church." ([Acts 20:13-27 The First Pastors' Conference](#))

**John MacArthur** - Why Paul chose to walk to [Assos](#) is not stated. It is most likely that it gave him more time to instruct the disciples from Troas who accompanied him. Paul's selfless love for the church is notably clear. He was available to minister for an entire night

and through a twenty-mile walk the next morning. No sacrifice was too great for the apostle to make for the building up of the saints. He was tirelessly available to his beloved people.

**BlaiKlock** comments on the journey from Troas to [Miletus](#) (Acts 20:13-16) - "In a few business-like words Luke takes his readers over some of the most storied coasts of ancient myth and history."

**Bruce** suggests that Paul "stayed till the last possible moment, probably to be assured of Eutychus's complete restoration to consciousness and health, and then took a shortcut by land to join the ship at [Assos](#)."

**But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos** - Luke (et.al.) goes by sea, while Paul goes by land.

**Vincent** - The distance was twenty miles; less than half the distance by sea.

**Set sail for Assos:** [Assos](#) was a seaport south of Troas in Mysia in the province of Asia.

**Set sail** (321)(**anago** from **ana** = up, again, away + **ago** = to bring, lead) a nautical technical term - In the passive voice it was a nautical term meaning to put (out) to sea, set sail. (Luke 8:22; Acts 13:13; 16:11; 18:21; 20:3, 13; 21:1, 2; 27:2, 4, 12, 21; 28:10, 11).

**Intending from there to take Paul on board:** Same verb in 2 Ti 4:11+ "Pick up Mark"

**Take...on board** (353) (**analambano** from **aná** = up + **lambáno** = take) means literally to take up, to assume. Depending on the context **analambano** can mean to cause to go up, to lift up and carry away as in the Ascension of Christ (Acts 1:2, 11, 22), to take up in order to carry (Acts 7:43, Eph 6:13, 16), to pick up (someone to take along on a journey - 2Ti 4:11) and as in the present context to take aboard a ship (Acts 20:13, 14).

**For so he had arranged it:** The verb **diatasso** (below) is like giving military orders and the perfect tense indicates past completed action with ongoing effect. Paul's order stood fast. Paul used **diatasso** in his command for a collection for the saints at Jerusalem which was to be taken by both the Corinthians and the Galatians (1 Cor 16:1)

**Arranged** (1299)(**diatasso** from **dia** = through + **tasso** = order) means literally to arrange thoroughly, to arrange in its proper order, to issue orderly and detailed instructions as to what must be done. To institute, prescribe, to appoint, to set in order (Titus 1:5+), ordain (1 Cor 7:17 regarding marital conditions); to give directions (Acts 7:44-God directed Moses to make the Tabernacle according to pattern), to command (with the implication of setting in order) as did Emperor Claudius' "commanding" that Jews must leave Rome (Acts 18:2+, cp Lk 3:13+). **Diatasso** was a technical word for carrying out laws and sometimes used by military and government officials (cf Acts 18:2+, Lk 3:13+). It was a word that denoted a command given from an authority. Moulton and Milligan add that **diatasso** was a technical term used in connection with wills, as well as a general word for commanding.

**Zodhiates** - The verb **diatássō** from which **diatage** derives is not simply to command or give an order, but to penetrate into a certain situation. This is suggested by the prep. **diá**, through or thoroughly, and **tasso**, to arrange in an orderly manner, e.g., when a person determines the proper arrangement of things or situations, he orders or commands that such arrangements be executed. Note also the derivative **táγμα** (5001), anything arranged in an orderly fashion as a body of troops, a band of soldiers, order, succession of the resurrection as in 1 Cor. 15:23; also the adjective **taktós** (5002), an arranged or proper day as in Acts 12:21 referring to the set day in which Herod sat on his speaking platform. This detailed understanding of the basic word **tássō** and its cognates is necessary if we are to properly understand **diatássō** not as a mere capricious ordering or commanding and **diatage** not as an arbitrary commandment, order, ordinance, disposition or appointment, but something that is thought out and proposes orderliness and method. (Complete Word Study Dictionary, NT)

[TDNT - abridged online](#) on **diatasso** -

1. "to order," "to dispose," "to decide," "to establish," "to give directions."
2. Rare in the LXX, where it has such senses as "to order," "to arrange," "to allot," "to determine," "to measure," and "to command."
3. In the NT Jesus "directs" in Lk. 8:55, Paul arranges in Acts 20:13, Claudius orders in Acts 18.2, the officer gives instructions in Acts 23:31, the master commands in Lk. 17:9, God gives directions in Acts 7:44, Jesus instructs in Mt. 11:1, the Lord has commanded in 1 Cor. 9:14, and the apostle gives various directions in 1 Cor. 7:17; 11:34; 16:1. The sense is "to direct" in Tit. 1:5 and "to ordain" in Gal. 3:19, where the role of angels suggests that the law does not come directly from God, although God, of course, intends it.
4. In the apostolic fathers Ignatius uses the term relative to his own ordination (Ephesians 3.1; Trallians 3.3), 1 Clem. 43.1 says that Moses records what is ordained for him, and 1 Clem. 20.6 maintains that the sea does

what God has appointed for it. In Diog. 7.2 heaven, earth, and sea are ordained by God.

**Diatasso** - 16x in 16v - Usage: arrange(1), arranged(1), commanded(3), direct(1), directed(4), gave orders(2), giving instructions(1), ordained(1), ordered(1), orders(1).

Matthew 11:1 When Jesus had finished **giving instructions** to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

**Comment:** Jesus uses diatasso when He issued orderly and detailed instructions as to what must be done.

Luke 3:13+ And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been **ordered** to."

Luke 8:55+ And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He **gave orders** for something to be given her to eat.

Luke 17:9+ "He does not thank the slave because he did the things which were **commanded**, does he?  
10 "So you too, when you do all the things which are **commanded** you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'"

**Marshall** - The point is that slaves have to carry out their duties without expecting to thereby place their masters under obligation

Acts 7:44+ "Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses **directed** him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen.

Acts 18:2+ And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because [Claudius](#) had **commanded** all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them,

**A T Robertson** on **diatasso** in this verse - Perfect active articular infinitive of diatassō, old verb to dispose, arrange, here with accusative of general reference. Dia here is causal sense, "because of the having ordered as to [Claudius](#)." This was about A.D. 49, done, Suetonius says (Claudius C. 25), because "the Jews were in a state of constant tumult at the instigation of one [Chrestus](#)" (probably among the Jews about Christ so pronounced). At any rate Jews were unpopular in Rome for Tiberius had deported 4,000 to Sardinia. There were 20,000 Jews in Rome. Probably mainly those implicated in the riots actually left.

Acts 20:13+ But we, going ahead to the ship, set sail for Assos, intending from there to take Paul on board; for so he had **arranged** it, intending himself to go by land.

Acts 23:31+ So the soldiers, in accordance with their **orders**, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris.

Acts 24:23+ Then he **gave orders** to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from ministering to him.

1 Corinthians 7:17 Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I **direct** in all the churches.

**Vine** - the word diatassō signifies to prescribe or appoint. The apostle was making clear to the saints in Corinth that these instructions were not by way of exceptional treatment in their case, they were a general obligation for all churches. The apostolic authority is stressed both by the emphasis upon the pronoun "I" and by the use of the middle voice of the verb rendered "ordain."

1 Corinthians 9:14 So also the Lord **directed** those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 11:34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that you will not come together for judgment. The remaining matters I will **arrange** when I come.

1 Corinthians 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as **Idirected** the churches of Galatia, so do you also.

Galatians 3:19+ Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been **ordained** through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

**Comment:** God instructing the angels what to accomplish.

Titus 1:5+ For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would **set in order** what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

**Diatasso** - 11x in the Septuagint - Jdg. 3:23; Jdg. 5:9; 1 Sam. 13:11; 1 Ki. 11:18 (**assigned** him food); 1 Chr. 9:33; 2 Chr. 5:11; Prov. 9:12; Ezek. 21:19; Ezek. 21:20; Ezek. 42:20; Ezek. 44:8

**Gilbrant** on **diatasso** in Classical Greek and Septuagint Usage - The verb diatassō occurs in Greek writings from the time of Herodotus. It is used in the Septuagint (e.g., Judges 5:9; 1 Kings 11:18 [LXX 3 Kings]; Ezekiel 21:24 [LXX 21:19]) to translate eight different Hebrew words that all refer to "order, direct or command." (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Diastasso** in the Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint - A to appoint, to assign [τι τινα] 1 Kgs 11:18; to set [abs.] Ez ek 21:25; to draw up, to set in array [τινα] 2 Macc 12:20; to make arrangements, to purpose [abs.] 1 Sa 13:11; M to arrange for oneself [τι] 4 Macc 8:3, P to be appointed, to be constituted 2 Chr 5:11

**Intending himself to go by land** It was about 20 miles over a paved Roman road, less than half the distance of the sea voyage around [Cape Lectum](#). It was a beautiful walk in the spring-time and no doubt Paul enjoyed it whatever his reason was for going thus to [Assos](#) while the rest went by sea. Certainly he was entitled to a little time alone, this one day, as Jesus sought the Father in the night watches Mt 14:23

**Jamieson-Fausset-Brown** explains "In sailing southward from Troas to Assos, one has to round Cape Lecture, and keeping due east to run along the northern shore of the Gulf of [Adramyttium](#), on which it lies. This is a sail of nearly forty miles; whereas by land, cutting right across, in a southeasterly direction, from sea to sea, by that excellent [Roman road](#) which then existed, the distance was scarcely more than half. The one way Paul wished his companions to take, while he himself, longing perhaps to enjoy a period of solitude (**Ed**: Or alternatively to give the disciples in Troas more time with him as they journeyed on the trip to Assos. Knowing Paul's passion for discipleship and his awareness of the brevity of time, I think this is more likely than him seeking solitude.), took the other, joining the ship, by appointment, at [Assos](#)."

#### Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

NET Acts 20:14 When he met us in Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene.

GNT Acts 20:14 ς δ̅ συν βαλλεν̅ μ ν ε ς τ ν̅ σσον, ναλαβ̅ ντες α τ ν̅ λθομεν ε ς Μιτυλ νην,

NLT Acts 20:14 He joined us there, and we sailed together to Mitylene.

KJV Acts 20:14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

ESV Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene.

ASV Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

CSB Acts 20:14 When he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

NIV Acts 20:14 When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene.

NKJ Acts 20:14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

NRS Acts 20:14 When he met us in Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene.

YLT Acts 20:14 and when he met with us at Assos, having taken him up, we came to Mitylene,

- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And when he met us at Assos** - ([See Map](#))

**Met** (4820)(**sumballo**) to bring together, to meet. Imperfect tense may imply that Paul was seen and taken in by boat as he was nearing Assos (Bruce).

**Took him on board** (353)(**analambano** from **ana** = up + **lambano** = take) means literally to take up, to assume. Depending on the context **analambano** can mean to cause to go up, to lift up and carry away as in the Ascension of Christ (Acts 1:2, 11, 22), to take up in order to carry (Acts 7:43, Eph 6:13, 16), to pick up (someone to take along on a journey - 2Ti 4:11-note), to take aboard a ship (Acts 20:13, 14).

**We took him on board and came to Mitylene** - ([Article and Map](#)) ([See Map](#)) "The capital of [Lesbos](#) about thirty miles from Assos,

an easy day's sailing." (Robertson)

**Acts 20:15 Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios; and the next day we crossed over to Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus.**

NET Acts 20:15 We set sail from there, and on the following day we arrived off Chios. The next day we approached Samos, and the day after that we arrived at Miletus.

GNT Acts 20:15 κ κεθεν ποπλεσαντες τ πιοσ κατηντσαμεν ντικρυς Χ ου, τ δ τρ παρεβλομεν ες Σ μον, τ δ χομν λθομεν ες Μ λητον.

NLT Acts 20:15 The next day we sailed past the island of Kios. The following day we crossed to the island of Samos, and a day later we arrived at Miletus.

KJV Acts 20:15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

ESV Acts 20:15 And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus.

ASV Acts 20:15 And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus.

CSB Acts 20:15 Sailing from there, the next day we arrived off Chios. The following day we crossed over to Samos, and the day after, we came to Miletus.

NIV Acts 20:15 The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.

NKJ Acts 20:15 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.

NRS Acts 20:15 We sailed from there, and on the following day we arrived opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos, and the day after that we came to Miletus.

YLT Acts 20:15 and thence having sailed, on the morrow we came over-against Chios, and the next day we arrived at Samos, and having remained in Trogyllium, on the following day we came to Miletus,

- **we came to Miletus:** Ac 20:17 2Ti 4:20
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Troas to Miletus  
Click to Enlarge

**Sailing from there, we arrived the following day opposite Chios:** **Opposite** (481)(**antikrus**- only in Acts 20:15) - meaning to come right down in front of and the notion of **anta** is made plainer by **antikrus**, face to face with. They probably lay off the coast (anchoring) during the night instead of putting into the harbour. [The Island of Chios](#) is about eight miles from the mainland.

**Sailing from** (636)(**apopleo** from **apo** = from + **pleo** = to sail) was a nautical technical term, of ships sailing away. To depart by ship. Only used 4x all by Luke in Acts - Acts 13:4; Acts 14:26; Acts 20:15; Acts 27:1

**Arrived** (2658)(**katantao** from **katá** intensifier + **antáo** = meet, to come opposite, meet face to face) means to come to or to arrive at and literally referred to finishing a journey or arrive at one's destination (Acts 13:51, 16:1, 18:19, 24, 21:7, 25:13, 27:12; 28:13). This meaning easily gives way to the figurative sense of reaching a goal (attain to, arrive at) as in Php 3:11.

**Constable** - **Chios** was the major town of a small island by the same name on which the poet Homer had been born. **Samos** was another island off the coast of Asia directly west of Ephesus another day's sail south. Miletus stood 30 miles south of Ephesus on the mainland.

**And the next day** - The third day in reality from Assos and the fourth from Troas.

**We crossed over to Samos (map):** the birthplace of the mathematician [Pythagoras](#)

**Crossed over** (3846) (**paraballo** from **para** - beside + **ballo** = throw) literally meant to throw alongside, to come near to something, to put in by. It was a nautical technical term, of a ship approaching land, coming near by ship, crossing over. In seamen's speech, "to come near by ship." Only use in the New Testament.

In the **Septuagint** - Ruth 2:16; Prov. 2:2; Prov. 4:20; Prov. 5:1; Prov. 5:13; Prov. 22:17

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek *paraballō* comes from *para* (3706) meaning "alongside" or "beside," and *ballō* (900), meaning "to throw." This combination, "to throw beside," as in the throwing of fodder to horses, is evident in pre-Christian literature (*Liddell-Scott*). *Paraballō* is used in the same manner in early Christian literature of the "throwing" of martyrs to the wild beasts (Bauer). *Paraballō* is used in another sense outside the New Testament; there it is translated "give up" or "expose" oneself as to danger (*ibid.*). In the Septuagint *paraballō* usually translates the Hebrew term *nāṭāh*, meaning "stretch out, incline" (cf. Proverbs 2:2; 5:1). In Ruth 2:16 *paraballō* translates the Hebrew term *shālāl* where Boaz instructed his harvesters to "draw out" some whole sheaves of barley for Ruth to pick up as she gleaned behind them. In all instances *paraballō* is used for a positive result. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**And the day following** "The day holding itself next to the one before". This would be the fourth from Assos.

The trip from Mitylene to Miletus was three days; because of the dangerous coastal waters they only sailed during the day.

**We came to Miletus:** [Melitus](#) was a seacoast town about 28 miles south of Ephesus. The [modern site is several miles from the sea](#) (or [click here](#)) due to the silt from the [Maeander River](#). This city, once the chief city of the Ionian Greeks, was now quite eclipsed by Ephesus.

**Deffinbaugh** makes an interesting observation - The ship which Paul sailed on seems to have been on a "milk run," stopping at various ports along its way toward Caesarea (Acts 21:8). One may well wonder why Paul would have taken a ship which had so many delays if he were in such a hurry to reach Jerusalem. The only reasonable answer to this is that all such ships would have had delays for unloading and offloading cargo, for supplies, repairs, and seamen. The ship which Paul took must have had the shortest travel time, and thus Paul endured the delays because they were minimum. ([Acts 20:1-38 Preparation for Pentecost](#))

**Acts 20:16 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 in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.**

NET Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so as not to spend time in the province of Asia, for he was hurrying to arrive in Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

GNT Acts 20:16 κεκρ κει γ ρ Πα λος παραπλε σαι τ ν φεσον, πως μ γ νηται α τ χρονοτριβ σαι ν τ σ · σπευδεν γ ρ ε δυνατ ν ε η α τ τ ν μ ραν τ ς πεντηκοστ ς γεν σθαι ε ς εροσ λυμα.

NLT Acts 20:16 Paul had decided to sail on past Ephesus, for he didn't want to spend any more time in the province of Asia. He was hurrying to get to Jerusalem, if possible, in time for the Festival of Pentecost.

KJV Acts 20:16 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.

ESV Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

ASV Acts 20:16 For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

CSB Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so he would not have to spend time in Asia, because he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for the day of Pentecost.

NIV Acts 20:16 Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

NKJ Acts 20:16 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.

NRS Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

YLT Acts 20:16 for Paul decided to sail past Ephesus, that there may not be to him a loss of time in Asia, for he hastened, if it were possible for him, on the day of the Pentecost to be at Jerusalem.

- **For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus:** Ac 20:13 18:21 19:21 21:4 12:13 24:17 Ro 15:24-28
- **on the day of Pentecost:** Ac 2:1 Ex 34:22 1Co 16:8
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For Paul had decided:** He had made up his mind.

**Decided** (determined) (2919) (**krino** is a root of English words like critic, critical [kritikos] = a decisive point at which judgment is made) primarily signifies to distinguish, to decide between (in the sense of considering two or more things and reaching a decision), to make up one's mind, to separate, to discriminate. The perfect tense indicates that Paul had reached a decision and remained with it.

**To sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia** - The [Roman province of Asia](#), not the continent.

**Spend time** (5551) (**chronotribeo** from **chronos** - time + **tribo** = to rub, to wear out, to expend) means to pass or spend time, to spend time with purposeful delay, to procrastinate, to linger, to lose or waste time.

**Vincent** - "Only here in New Testament. The word (chronotribeo) carries the suggestion of a waste of time (chronos), being compounded with tribo, to rub; to wear out by rubbing. The sense is nearly equivalent to our expression, fritter away time."

**Robertson on spend time** - [chronotribeō] (chronos = time, tribō = to spend), only here in the N. T. The verb tribō, to rub, to wear out by rubbing, lends itself to the idea of wasting time. It was only a year ago that Paul had left Ephesus in haste after the riot. It was not expedient to go back so soon if he meant to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost. Paul clearly felt (Rom. 15) that the presentation of this collection at Pentecost to the Jewish Christians would have a wholesome influence as it had done once before (Acts 11:30).

**For he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible Hurrying** is [imperfect tense](#) - Paul was making haste, earnestly, even zealously desiring to make it to Jerusalem by the time of the Feast of Weeks!

**Constable** suggests "Paul's visit to Miletus, therefore, must have occurred in late April of 57 A.D."

**Warren Wiersbe** - There were fifty days between Passover (Acts 20:6) and Pentecost (Acts 20:16), and Paul's trip from Philippi to Troas had already consumed twelve of them (Acts 20:6). It took another four days to get to Miletus, so Paul decided not to go to Ephesus lest he lose any more valuable time. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Was hurrying** (4692) (**speudo**) means to do something quickly, to be in a hurry, hasten, make haste (Acts 22:16). To cause something to happen soon or come into being by exercising special effort (2 Peter 3:12+) BDAG adds that speudo meant "to be very interested in discharging an obligation, be zealous, exert oneself, be industrious, in the Greco-Roman world a mark of civic excellence."

**Friberg on speudo** - (1) intransitively, as doing something as quickly as possibly hurry, make haste, hasten (Act 22:18); participle as an adverb hastily, quickly (Lk 2:16); (2) transitively urge on, be eager for, cause to happen soon (2Pe 3:12)

**Silva on Classic Use of speudo** - This word group (from an IE root \*(s)peud-, "to press, hurry") expresses first of all quick movement in the interests of a person or cause, but hurrying to do something usually reflects eagerness, and so early on the terms suggest what we might call "inner movement" or a strong desire and exertion in carrying out of a matter. Thus the verb speudo occurs over 20x already in Homer in various contexts, e.g., trans. of urging on a marriage (Od. 19.137), intrans. of a deer hurrying to escape from a lion (Il. 116-19), of Agamemnon being eager for battle (4.225), etc. (NIDNTT)

**Speudo** - 5x in 5v - Usage: hastening(1), hurried(1), hurry(2), hurrying(1), make haste(1).

Luke 2:16note So they (the shepherds) came in a **hurry** and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

Luke 19:5 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, **hurry** and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 And he **hurried** and came down and received Him gladly.

Acts 20:16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he **was hurrying** ([imperfect tense](#)) to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 22:18 and I saw Him saying to me, '**Make haste**, ([aorist imperative](#) = Don't delay! Do this now!) and

get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.'

2 Peter 3:12 [note](#) looking for and **hastening** ([present tense](#) = habitually, continually) the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

**Spseudo** - Up to 66x in 49v in the Septuagint - Gen. 18:6; Gen. 19:22; Gen. 24:18; Gen. 24:20; Gen. 24:46; Gen. 44:11; Gen. 45:9; Exod. 15:15; Exod. 34:8; Jos. 4:10; Jos. 8:14; Jos. 8:19; Jdg. 5:22; Jdg. 20:41; 1 Sam. 4:14; 1 Sam. 4:16; 1 Sam. 20:38; 1 Sam. 23:27; 1 Sam. 25:18; 1 Sam. 25:23; 1 Sam. 25:34; 1 Sam. 28:20; 1 Sam. 28:21; 1 Sam. 28:24; 2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 17:16; 1 Ki. 18:7; 1 Ki. 21:33; 1 Ki. 21:41; 2 Ki. 9:13; 2 Chr. 10:18; 2 Chr. 24:5; 2 Chr. 26:20; Est. 2:9; Est. 3:15; Est. 8:14; Prov. 7:23; Prov. 28:22; Eccl. 5:1; Eccl. 7:9; Mic. 4:1; Nah. 2:6; Isa. 16:5; Jer. 4:6; Jer. 38:20; Ezek. 30:9; Dan. 3:91; Dan. 5:6;

**Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint** - Ge 18:6; 19,22; 24,18.20 to hasten, to be hasty Ge 18,6; to make haste with, to make haste to. Esther 8:14; to seek eagerly, to strive after [τι] Isa 16:5; to hasten, to shorten [τι]

**Gilbrant** on use of **spseudo** in the Classical Greek and Septuagint - This verb is used in classical Greek with a variety of related meanings: "get going, urge or press on, hasten, seek eagerly, strive after, further zealously, be eager (to do something), show eagerness (for something), be anxious (that something be done)," etc. (cf. Liddell-Scott). It is almost always used in a literal sense to describe the movement of people or animals.

**Spseudō appears some 50 times in the Septuagint** most frequently to mean "make haste." Even so, various shades of meaning are implicit: (1) to move with fear, as in 2 Chronicles 10:18 when Rehoboam "made haste" to flee; (2) to move quickly to obey, as in 2 Chronicles 24:5 when Joash commanded the priests to "make haste" to gather taxes for repairs to the temple; (3) to respond without delay, with alacrity, as in 2 Kings 9:13 (LXX 4 Kings 9:13) when they "made haste" to put their garments under Jehu at the top of the stairs; (4) to strive zealously, as in Proverbs 28:22 of one who "makes haste" to be rich; (5) to be hasty, as in Ecclesiastes 5:1 of one who is "hasty" with the mouth (cf. Ecclesiastes 7:9 [LXX 7:10]); and (6) to hasten, as in Isaiah 16:5 where the prophet held out the prospect of "hastening" righteousness. Thus both transitive meanings (a desire or effort to bring something about) and intransitive meanings (one's own sense of urgency or haste) accrue to spseudō, a fact illustrated in the papyri of the New Testament period also. (See *Moulton-Milligan*.) In the New Testament, except for 2 Peter 3:12, spseudō was used exclusively by Luke. The meaning in each of these is rather ordinary, indicating (intransitively) that one hurried or made haste. But perhaps the Septuagint usage discussed above should cause us to see in most of these instances a sense of moving with alacrity or quickness to obey. At the least, the idea is to "waste no time" (Marshall, *New International Greek New Testament*, Luke, p.697). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**If possible** is a fourth class conditional = The form is a remote possibility. It was only some thirty days till Pentecost.

**On the day of Pentecost** ([ISBE article](#)): Why would Paul be in such a hurry? The most likely answer is in Deuteronomy 16

Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you. (Dt 16:16-17)

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the day of Pentecost?](#)

**John MacArthur** - The delay caused by the plot against his life at Corinth (20:3) had forced Paul to miss celebrating Passover in Jerusalem. He was still determined to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after Passover.

**Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church: [Apo de tes Miletou pempas \(AAPMSN\) eis Epheson metekalesato \(3SAMI\) tous presbuteros tes ekklesias. \(NASB: Lockman\)](#)**

NET Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, telling the elders of the church to come to him.

GNT Acts 20:17 π ῶ τ ς Μιλ του π μψας ε ς φεσον μετεκαλ σατο το ς πρεσβυτ ρους τ ς κκλησ ας.

NLT Acts 20:17 But when we landed at Miletus, he sent a message to the elders of the church at Ephesus, asking them to come and meet him.

KJV Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

ESV Acts 20:17 Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him.

ASV Acts 20:17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church.

CSB Acts 20:17 Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

NIV Acts 20:17 From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

NKJ Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

NRS Acts 20:17 From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him.

YLT Acts 20:17 And from Miletus, having sent to Ephesus, he called for the elders of the assembly,

- **elders:** Ac 20:28 11:30 14:23 15:4,6,23 16:4 1Ti 5:17 Titus 1:5 Jas 5:14 1Pe 5:1 2Jn 1:1 3Jn 1:1
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S LAST MEETING WITH THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

In **inductive Bible study**, one of the key disciplines we must develop is learning to **interrogate** the text with appropriate questions. Acts 20:17-38 is an excellent passage to practice this technique, asking **Where?, Why?, Who?, When?, What? and How?** Take a few minutes and **prayerfully** read (take your time - don't speed read) Acts 20 (but read the entire chapter to help establish the **context**) asking as many of the 5W/H questions as you can before you look at the notes. As you read the passage try to get an overview or setting of this wonderful scene. As you read, imagine what it was like to be present. As you prayerfully interrogate Acts 20:17-38, try to imagine the scene and yourself as one of the elders. (asking and answering the questions will help you do this and then this text becomes far more than just another passage, but one that you will remember for the rest of your life!).

Below are some examples of questions you might ask to help establish the setting of this scene (in other words you need to establish the **context** of any passage or paragraph you are studying lest you end up deriving a faulty interpretation!)

How important is it to develop the discipline of querying the text? Listen to **John Piper's** answer...

You can learn more from a book if you stop and ask it questions than if you just read it passively. That includes the Bible too. One of the great problems in Bible reading is that we move our eyes over the words and come to the end of a column and don't know what we've read; we don't feel our minds or spirits expanded because we saw nothing fresh. It was purely mechanical. There was no discovery, no life, no breakthroughs to new insight. One of the best ways to change that is to train yourself to ask questions of the text. Often the posing of the question itself will already carry its answer with it and will open your mind to new things. This fairly prosaic, historical text in Luke 3:21-38 gives me an opportunity to show you what I mean. I'll simply take you with me through this text, pointing out the questions I asked and the answers I came up with. My guess is that as you follow me, questions of your own will arise. Good questions usually beget other questions, and that's how insight grows and grows. ([Introductory comments to his sermon on The Baptism and the Genealogy of Jesus](#) - Now click the link to see actual examples of questions Dr Piper asked to actually preach this text! Now begin to incorporate this valuable discipline into your Bible reading. Beware of the danger of a "through the Bible in a year" reading program -- it is tempting to "just get through" the daily reading, but come to the end of the day and not even remember what you have read. That's "passive" reading. Interrogation of the text is "active" reading--your Teacher God's Spirit will richly reward you for your "labor of love!")

## SOME 5W/H QUESTIONS

**When?** Third Missionary Journey. Here are the Acts passages that mark the beginning of each of **Paul's 3 missionary journeys...**

1. Paul's 1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4) ([Refer to Map 1](#))
2. Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey synopsis (Acts 15:35) ([Refer to Map 2](#))
3. Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey Goto (Acts 18:23-21:16) (Circa 52-57AD) ([Refer to Map 3](#))

**Who?** Who are the participants in this scene? Paul, his companions (Acts 20:4), Luke (Acts 20:6 = "we") and the elders of the church at [Ephesus](#) (capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor, site of worship of [Artemis](#)).

**Where?** From [Miletus: \(See Map for location on Southwestern coast of Modern day Turkey.\) \(Diagram of Ancient Miletus - note the protected harbors\)](#) Approximately how far did the elders have to travel from Ephesus to meet Paul (see mileage scale in lower left hand corner of [Map](#))?

#### Related Resources:

- [Background discussion of Travel in Biblical Times;](#)
- [Multiple photos of archaeological remains in Miletus - see index in left column](#)

**Why?** Why does Paul call the elders from Ephesus? In context (Acts 20:17-38) these are Paul's final instructions (cp Acts 20:38) Why did Paul not go directly to Ephesus? (Acts 20:16).

**What?** What does Paul do in Acts 20:17? What are the specific instructions he gives the elders? What are the warnings? etc. (cp Acts 20:28-32)

**How?** How long (approximately and assuming they were traveling by foot) would it take for the elders to come from Ephesus **Clue:** One could travel about 30 miles/day by foot). From the Map of Miletus, it is apparent that Ephesus is about 30 miles from Miletus. Whoever Paul sent to call the elders would have taken one full day and to return with the elders would take another day. Thus the elders would have arrived on the third day. How do Paul and the elders feel? How do they express their emotions? (Acts 20:37, 38)

**Called to** (summoned) ([3333](#))(**metakaleo** from **metá** = denoting change of place or condition + **kaléo** = to call) means to call from one place to another. In the middle voice (reflexive) the idea is Paul **summoned** the elders to himself. (All uses in the NT = Acts 7:14; 10:32; 20:17; 24:25, [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) Uses = Hosea 11:1, 2). **Summon** probably conveys Paul's sense better than **called**, because to summon someone implies the exercise of authority and the sense of a demand, not just a suggestion.

**Elders** ("presbyters" = NAB, "spiritual leaders" = GWT) ([4245](#))(**presbuteros** the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) ([Click](#) Vine's discussion) referred to men who were older or more senior with no negative connotations but rather a sense of venerability. **Presbuteros** is transliterated into English as "presbyter" (a leader in one of the Jewish communities--especially a member of the **Sanhedrin**--or of the early Christian churches) and from which the word "priest" (from Late Latin presbyter) was derived. The secular practice was for older men with seniority to serve as ambassadors to other states and as advisors within the Greek political community or in the management of public affairs. So these were men of "ripe age" and experience to whom was committed the direction and government of individual churches. It should be emphasized that in the context of its Biblical use the concept of elder had less to do with age per se than with the quality of one's spiritual character (reputation is what others think about you but character is what those most intimately associated know is really true about you) and possession of the ability to teach. Simply being older, including even being older in the faith, does not by itself qualify a man for leadership in the church.

**Compare...**Acts 14:23+ And when they had appointed **elders** for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Presbuteros** - 66x in 66v -Matt 15:2; 16:21; 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57; 27:1, 3, 12, 20, 41; 28:12; Mark 7:3, 5; 8:31; 11:27; 14:43, 53; 15:1; Luke 7:3; 9:22; 15:25; 20:1; 22:52; John 8:9; Acts 2:17; 4:5, 8, 23; 6:12; 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22f; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 23:14; 24:1; 25:15; 1 Tim 5:1f, 17, 19; Titus 1:5; Heb 11:2; Jas 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1, 5; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1; Rev 4:4, 10; 5:5f, 8, 11, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4

**Presbuteros** meaning church **elders** is discussed initially in Acts, refined in the "pastoral epistles" (especially 1Timothy and Titus), and briefly mentioned in James and 1 Peter. In first Timothy Paul says

Let the **elders** (presbuteros) who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching... Do not receive an accusation against an **elder** (presbuteros) except on the basis of two or three witnesses. (1Ti 5:17,19)

In the book of Acts, Luke has several references to **elders** in the sense of spiritually mature leaders in the church. In a very instructive passage we read

And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the **elders** were present. (Acts 21:17-18)

**John MacArthur** has a summary of the evolution of elder rule commenting that "the mention of James and all the **elders** (Acts 21:18) marks a significant change in that leadership. When the **Church** at Jerusalem began, it was ruled by the **Apostles** (Acts 2:42; 4:35, 36, 37; 5:2). As the church grew, the apostles recognized the need for assistance with the administrative details, and seven men were chosen to serve under them (Acts 6:2, 3, 4, 5, 6). Elders are first mentioned in Acts 11:30, and by the time of the Jerusalem Council they had assumed a prominent role (Acts 15:2, Acts 15:4, Acts 15:6, Acts 15:22, 23; Acts 16:4). Now Paul and the others found the church led by the elders alone; the apostles are not mentioned. At least one was already dead—James the brother of John (Acts 12:2). The others had turned over the leadership responsibilities to the elders and left the city to engage in missionary work. Elder rule was thus being established as the New Testament pattern of church government (cf. Acts 14:23; 20:17). ([MacArthur, J: Acts 1-12; Acts 13-28 Moody Press](#))

**H C Trumbull** writes about conferring **responsibility**...There are two sides to the question of quitting ourselves of responsibility for those whom we have set to a special work. On the one hand, we may err by meddling with their work and worrying over it; on the other hand, we may err by failing to show our continued interest in that work, and in those who have it in charge. Paul committed neither error. He laid responsibility on the Ephesian elders, and had no thought of attempting to take it from them; but he wanted them to consider that responsibility in all its bearings, and to be assured of his loving and prayerful sympathy with them in its discharge. **Here is a pattern for all those who have set others at work, in the church, in the Sunday school, in the place of business, in the home.** Do not worry yourself, nor worry those who have the thing in immediate charge, by your close attention to the details of their business—which is not yours. But do not fail to show them that you consider them lovingly and prayerfully, and that you commend them "to God and to the word of His grace" in their life and work—before their Master and yours. (Biblical Illustrator)

**Warren Wiersbe** - In the Book of Acts, Luke reports eight messages given by the Apostle Paul to various people: a Jewish synagogue congregation (Acts 13:14–43); Gentiles (Acts 14:14–18; 17:22–34); church leaders (Acts 20:17–38); a Jewish mob (Acts 22:1–21); the Jewish council (Acts 23:1–10); and various government officials (Acts 24:10–21; 26:1–32). His address to the Ephesian elders is unique in that it reveals Paul the pastor rather than Paul the evangelist or Paul the defender of the faith. The message enables us to get a glimpse of how Paul ministered in Ephesus for three years. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Swindoll** - When they arrived in Miletus, Paul sent one of the interns to Ephesus to summon the church elders. When the elders arrived, Paul gathered them for what we might call a one-day "pastors' conference." Of all his letters and his declarations recorded by Luke, none is more intimate or emotional than this final farewell. He looked into the faces of some of his closest friends, realizing he had to leave them to stand or fall on their own; he would no longer be available to help them. (Acts - Swindoll's Living Insights)

**Acts 20:18** And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time: [os de paregenonto](#) (3PAMI) [pros auton eipen](#) (3SAAI) [autois, humeis epistasthe](#) (2PPPI) [apo protes emerap' es epeben](#) (1SAAI) [eis ten Asian pos meth' umon ton panta chronon egenomen](#), (1SAMI) :

NET Acts 20:18 When they arrived, he said to them, "You yourselves know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I set foot in the province of Asia,

GNT Acts 20:18 ὁ δὲ παρεγενοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰπὲν αὐτοῖς, μερὶς πρὸς ἅσασθε, ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἐστίν ἐπισημασθῆτε ὑμῖν ἐπισημασθῆτε ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἡμερῶν ὅτι ἐγενόμην ὑμῖν ἐν τῇ ἀσίᾳ,

NLT Acts 20:18 When they arrived he declared, "You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now

KJV Acts 20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

ESV Acts 20:18 And when they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,

ASV Acts 20:18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time,

CSB Acts 20:18 And when they came to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time--

NIV Acts 20:18 When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

NKJ Acts 20:18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you,

NRS Acts 20:18 When they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia,

YLT Acts 20:18 and when they were come unto him, he said to them, 'Ye -- ye know from the first day in which I came to Asia, how, with you at all times I was;

- **from:** Ac 18:19 19:1,10
- **How I was with you:** 2Co 1:12 6:3-11 1Th 1:5,6 2:1-10 2Th 3:7-9 2Ti 3:10
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PAUL'S LIFE OF INTEGRITY: AN OPEN BOOK!**

**You yourselves know** - The pronoun "you" is emphatic. Paul first appeals to their personal knowledge of his life in Ephesus. He reminds the elders of his example of ministry among them --The first time Paul had been in Ephesus briefly was in Acts 18:19 and later he had remained for over 2 years, initially in the synagogue for 3 months and then in the "school of Tyrannus" for 2 years (Acts 19:1, 8, 9, 10). Paul in a sense is challenging the Ephesian elders to examine his life. His life was the validation for what he proclaimed with his lips. A life that matches one's lips, is another way to describe **integrity** (integer - see more below).

### **Paul's 3 missionary journeys began in...**

Paul's 1st Missionary Journey (Acts 13:4)

Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey synopsis (Acts 15:35)

Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey Goto (Acts 18:23)

### **D Thomas summarizes Paul's Conscious Fidelity in the Discharge of His Ministry..**

I. Humbly. "With all humility of mind." (Acts 20:19)

II. Tenderly. "With many tears." (Acts 20:19)

III. Fully. "How I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." (Acts 20:20)

IV. Indefatigably. "Have taught you publicly from house to house." (Acts 20:20)

V. Unrestrictedly. "From house to house." (Acts 20:20)

VI. Evangelically. "Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:20)

(Biblical Illustrator)

**How I was with you the whole time** - **NET Bible Note** explains that the phrase "*how I was with you the whole time*" "could be understood to mean "*how I stayed with you the whole time*," but the following verses make it clear that **Paul's lifestyle** while with the Ephesians is in view here. Thus the translation "*how I lived the whole time I was with you*" makes this clear." Thus the NIV rendering conveys this nuance better than the NAS...

When they arrived, he said to them: "You know **how I lived the whole time** I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

**Comment:** Paul's emphasis is not on the quantity of time but the quality of his life while he was among them. They had witnessed his life, his ministry, his example.

**Dear pastor, teacher, church leader -- with all honesty and integrity, can you say the same thing to those you have ministered to for some time -- "You know what my lifestyle was when I ministered among you." Or do you have some "rooms" of your heart that you've kept shut so that no one could see how you lived?**

Paul was authentic, transparent, the "real deal," an "open book," a man whose life said "What you see is what you get!" Does this not speak of Paul's integrity and his character? Reputation is what other men think about us. Character is what God knows to be true about us! Gulp!

**See Related Resource: Integrity - A Few Thoughts**

Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews: [douleuon](#) (PAPMSN) [to kurio meta pases tapeinophrosunes kai dakruon kai peirasmon ton sumbanton](#) (AAPMPG) [moi en tais epiboulais ton loudaion](#):

NET Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, and with the trials that happened to me because of the plots of the Jews.

GNT Acts 20:19 δουλεων τ κυρ μετ π σης ταπεινοφροσ νης κα δακρ ων κα πειρασμ ν τ ν συμβ ντων μοι ν τα ς πιβουλα ς τ ν ουδα ων,

NLT Acts 20:19 I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears. I have endured the trials that came to me from the plots of the Jews.

KJV Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

ESV Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews;

ASV Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews;

CSB Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility, with tears, and with the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews--

NIV Acts 20:19 I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

NKJ Acts 20:19 "serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

NRS Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews.

YLT Acts 20:19 serving the Lord with all humility, and many tears, and temptations, that befell me in the counsels of the Jews against me;

- **Serving:** Ac 27:23 Jn 12:26 Ro 1:1,9 12:11 Ga 1:10 Eph 6:7 Col 3:24 1Th 1:9 2Pe 1:1 Rev 7:15
- **with all:** 1Co 15:9,10 2Co 3:5 7:5 12:7-10 Ga 4:13,14
- **With tears:** Acts 20:31 Ps 119:136 Jer 9:1 13:17 Luke 19:41 2Co 2:4 Php 3:18 2Ti 1:4
- **trials:** 1Co 4:9-13 2Co 4:7-11 11:23-30 Jas 1:2 1Pe 1:6
- **Through the plots:** Acts 20:3 9:23-25 13:50,51 14:5,6,19,20 17:5,13 2Co 11:26
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL'S EXAMPLE: A HUMBLE BOND-SERVANT

**Serving the Lord** - This phrase is similar to Paul's repeated description of himself as a "bond-servant (**doulos**) of Christ Jesus" (Ro 1:1, 2Co 4:5, Gal 1:10, Phil 1:1, Titus 1:1)

**Serving** (present tense = Paul's lifestyle, habitual practice)([1398](#))(**douleuo** from **doulos** = servant) means to be in a position of a slave and to act accordingly, conducting oneself in total service to another. **Douleuo** includes the idea of one serving another who owns him as a "possession."

**Lord** ([2962](#)) (**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power) describes the supreme One (in context = Jesus), the One Who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power.

**Paul** served the **Lord** (**kurios**), for he knew that...

No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (Mt 6:24+)

**Eadie** explains that for Christian **servicing** as Paul exemplified one must...

remember Christ the Master, and in serving others...serve Him—the Master not according to the flesh. In external aspect the service was to men, but in motive and spirit it was to the Lord (See Eph 6:7)...Menander has also said—"serve freely, and you are no longer a slave." (John Eadie, D., LL.D. The Epistle of St Paul to the Ephesians)

## **THE SECRET OF FRUITFUL SERVICE TO THE LORD**

**Swindoll** observes that Paul "didn't talk down to the Ephesians like they were ignorant or stupid. He spoke peer to peer, simply sharing information they lacked." (Ibid)

**Humility of mind** (5012)(**tapeinophrosune** from **tapeinos** = low lying, then low or humble + **phren** = to think) literally means to think with lowliness and thus speaks of humiliation or lowliness of mind, the quality of unpretentious behavior, a humble attitude, modesty or absence of arrogance (See the other 6 uses of **tapeinophrosune** - Ep 4:2 Php 2:3 Col 2:18, 2:23, 3:12, 1Pe 5:5). This mindset (or "heart-set") is the essence of having the "attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...He humbled Himself by becoming obedient..." (Php 2:5, Php 2:8) The idea is the esteeming one's self as small or recognizing one's insufficiency but at the same time recognizing the powerful sufficiency of God! Indeed, do we not see in Paul's **humility of mind** a clue as to why he was so greatly used by God! Recall Paul's record of his "out of body" experience (2Cor 12:2, 3) in which he was "caught up (Greek = **harpazo** ~ "raptured") into **Paradise** and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak." As a result of this incredible supernatural experience "because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- to keep me from exalting myself!" (2Cor 12:7). Paul "entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from" him (2Cor 12:8), to which the Lord Jesus responded..

My grace is sufficient (enough, adequate) for you, for (My)**power** (**dunamis** = supernatural ability to accomplish) is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2Cor 12:9see commentary notes)

**Comment:** Paul boasting about his weaknesses is compatible with a form of '**humility of mind.**' And what was the result? Paul experienced the "power of Christ." I personally believe (this is speculative so be a Berean-Acts 17:11) that this episode of Paul's having experiencing the sufficiency of God's grace and power 14 years earlier (and his learning to boast about his weaknesses) was a significant source of his supernatural power for ministry in the subsequent years. Keep in mind that Paul's "being caught up" to Paradise and subsequent thorn in his side would be somewhere around **Paul's First Missionary Journey**, possibly even coinciding with the time of his stoning in Iconium in Acts 14:19. (Compare **Chronology of Paul - 2Corinthians written about 58AD**)

**THOUGHT:** What looks to us as a "thorn in our flesh" at a moment in time, quite often takes on a different "hue" over time, if we grow in grace rather than allowing ourselves to become bitter rather than "better"!

**John Wesley** observed that "neither the Romans nor the Greeks had a word for humility." The very concept was so foreign and abhorrent to their way of thinking that they had no term to describe it. When, during the first several centuries of Christianity, pagan writers borrowed the term **tapeinophrosune**, they always used it derogatorily—frequently of Christians—because to them humility was a pitiable weakness!

**Vine** has an interesting thought on **humility of mind** noting that it is...

not a merely moral quality, but the **subjection of self** under the **authority of**, and in **response to**, the love of the Lord Jesus (cp 2Cor 5:14), and the power of the Holy Spirit to conform the believer to the character of Christ. In contrast to the world's idea of being "poor-spirited" (in Classical Greek **tapeinos** commonly carried that imputation), the Lord commends "**the poor in spirit**" (Mt 5:3+).

**Humility** as discussed below always had a negative connotation in classical Greek. Christianity elevated this term to the supreme virtue, in fact providing the ultimate antidote for self-love that poisons all relationships.

Paul was an imitator of Christ (1Cor 11:1, 1Cor 4:16) Whose Self-less example lifted **humility of mind** to the highest place in the sight of God when He declared...

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Mark 10:45, cp Lk 22:26, 27, Php 2:8 = "He humbled Himself")

Compare the preceding thoughts with Paul's words as he matured in Christ over the years...

1Cor 15:9 [55AD] = For **I am the least of the apostles**, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Ep 3:8 [61AD] = To me, **the very least of all saints**, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ,

1Ti 1:15 [63-66AD] = This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **sinners; of whom I am chief**.

**Rowland Hill** wrote...

See yon evening star, how bright it shines! how pure, how gentle are its rays! But, look, it is lower in the heavens than those that sparkle with a restless twinkling in the highest regions of the sky. God keeps you low that you may shine bright. Where do the rivers run that fertilize our soil? Is it in the barren top of yonder hill? No; in the vales beneath. If you would have the river, whose streams make glad the city of our God, to run through your hearts, and enrich them to His glory, you must abide in the vale of humility.

**With tears** - Many think of Paul as stern and cold, but clearly he was an emotional and passionate man. The elders had seen Paul's example of godly sorrow. Several times in Scripture we see Paul expressing his deep emotion - (Acts 20:31, 1Cor 2:4, Php 3:18, 2Ti 1:4, cp Jesus Lk 19:41) Indeed, Paul had been in their midst, going "to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed", filled with the truth of the Gospel of grace (Cp Ps 126:6).

**John MacArthur** says "Paul wept because of: 1) those who did not know Christ (cf. Ro 9:2, 3); 2) struggling, immature believers (2Co 2:4); and 3) the threat of false teachers (Acts 20:29, 30). ([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word](#))

**Trials** ([3986](#)) (**peirasmos** connotes trouble or something that breaks the pattern of peace, comfort, joy, and happiness in someone's life. Trials rightly faced are harmless and in fact beneficial to the saint as Peter (and James 1 explain), but wrongly met become temptations to evil as explained below. Acts 20:19KJV has **temptations** instead of **trials** and this leads to some confusion in the understanding of the Greek word **peirasmos**. The English word **temptation** originally referred to trials, whether good or bad, but the evil sense has monopolized the word in modern English. **Vincent** adds that it "is a mistake to define this word (peirasmos) as only solicitation to evil. It means trial of any kind, without reference to its moral quality." The context determines whether the intended purpose of the "temptation" is for good or for evil.

Dear follower in the steps of Christ (1Pe 2:21+, 1 Jn 2:6+), remember that we must not think that our persecution for the sake of our Lord is something that happens by accident. God allows it just as He did in Paul's life, designing variegated trial's individually suited for each believer's testing, purging, and cleansing.

We do well to remember as Paul must have continually recalled that God brings (or allows) such trials to prove and increase the strength and quality of our faith and to demonstrate its validity (read all of [James 1](#) for full context). Every trial becomes a test of faith designed to strengthen the believer's faith, but if the believer fails the test by wrongly responding, then that test becomes a temptation or a solicitation to evil.

Are you undergoing **trials** for the sake of serving the Lord Jesus Christ? Fret not dear blessed child of God. Be encouraged by **Spurgeon's** wise words regarding times of affliction...

I am afraid that all the grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals, and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?... I bear my witness that the worst days I have ever had have turned out to be my best days... I can bear my personal testimony that the best piece of furniture that I ever had in the house was a cross. I do not mean a material cross; I mean the cross of affliction and trouble.... In shunning a trial we are seeking to avoid a blessing.

**Swindoll** - Ministers who avoid sexual immorality, greed, and pride still must struggle with unfair criticism. The Ephesians didn't respond to the gospel as quickly as other groups Paul had preached to; the spiritual darkness covering Asia took a long time to penetrate. If that weren't difficult enough, Paul endured personal rejection so acute his enemies wanted to see him dead. It's hard not to take that personally, but he didn't succumb to discouragement. (Acts-Swindoll's Living Insights)

**The plots of the Jews** (E.g., Acts 13:50; 14:2-7, 19; 17:5-9, 13; 18:6, 12-17; 19:9; 20:3, 2Cor 11:24, 26) - The Ephesian elders knew the full story about the incessant persecution of Paul by his fellow Jews. It is fascinating that the very plot of the Jews at

Corinth was led to Paul spending this time with the Ephesian elders (See Acts 20:3). This reminds one of Joseph's words to his brothers who had sold him to slavery...

And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. (Genesis 50:20)

**Comment:** Perhaps you are being persecuted or going through a time of affliction for His Name's sake. If so, you can be sure that God is able to use your suffering for good, so hold on to Jesus.

**Acts 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house: [os ouden hupesteilamen](#) (1SAMI) [ton sumpheronton](#) (PAPNPG) [tou me anageilai](#) (AAN) [humin kai didachai](#) (AAN) [humas demosia kai kat' oikous](#):**

NET Acts 20:20 You know that I did not hold back from proclaiming to you anything that would be helpful, and from teaching you publicly and from house to house,

GNT Acts 20:20 ς ο δ ν πεσειλ μην τ ν συμφερ ντων το μ ναγγελαι μ ν κα διδ ξαι μ ς δημοσ κα κατ ο κους,

NLT Acts 20:20 I never shrank back from telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes.

KJV Acts 20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

ESV Acts 20:20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house,

ASV Acts 20:20 how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house,

CSB Acts 20:20 and that I did not shrink back from proclaiming to you anything that was profitable or from teaching it to you in public and from house to house.

NIV Acts 20:20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

NKJ Acts 20:20 "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

NRS Acts 20:20 I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

YLT Acts 20:20 how nothing I did keep back of what things are profitable, not to declare to you, and to teach you publicly, and in every house,

- **Did not shrink:** Ac 20:27,31 5:2 Dt 4:5 Ps 40:9,10 Eze 33:7-9 1Co 15:3 Col 1:28
- **profitable:** 1Co 12:7 14:6 Php 3:1 2Ti 3:16,17
- **and from:** Ac 20:31 2:46 5:42 Mk 4:34 2Ti 4:2
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL IS NO "SHRINKING VIOLET"

The phrase "[shrinking violet](#)" refers to a bashful or retiring person, which Paul was not!

A **shrinking violet** is a very shy person, someone who is an extreme introvert and does not enjoy attention or engaging with others. The earliest known use of the term shrinking violet was in 1820, in an article written by Leigh Hunt. However, Hunt used the term shrinking violet to refer to an actual flower. It wasn't until the end of the 1800s that the idiom came into use. The idea behind the expression is that a wild violet is a flower that grows in shady spots, out of the sun, and more or less hides its flowers under its leaves. ([Source](#))

**I did not shrink** ("kept nothing back" = KJV) - Absolute negation. Paul did not hold himself back. Paul was not intimidated by men! Paul was a man filled with the Spirit and thus filled with boldness (a great prayer to pray = Acts 4:29, 31+. Acts 2:4, 14+, Acts 4:13+,

Acts 9:27, 28, 29+).

**Barclay** sums up Paul's message - Paul makes certain claims for himself. (i) He had spoken fearlessly. He had told them all God's will and pandered neither to the fear nor the favor of men (ii) He had lived independently. His own hands had supplied his needs; and his work had been not only for his own sake but for the sake of others who were less fortunate than himself. (iii) He had faced the future gallantly. He was the captive of the Holy Spirit; and in that confidence he was able to brave everything the future might hold. (DSB)

**Shrink (5288)** (**hupostello** from **hupo** = under + **stéllō** = send or draw) means literally to draw under (out of sight) = draw oneself under = cower or shrink back. **Hupostello** was used for drawing back or down sails on a ship and so slackening the course, and metaphorically meant to be hesitant in doing something, shrinking back, avoiding, unwilling to utter something because of fear (Acts 20:27). Here in Acts 20:20 it means to keep silent about something, an attitude Paul says he did not have. In Gal 2:12+ the idea is that of consciously retreated from one's position. In the middle voice, the idea is to withdraw oneself, to cower, to timidly hesitate to avow what one believes, thus expressing a lack of faith (Hebrews 10:38+). **Dean Plumptre** notes that **hupostello** "belongs to the vocabulary of sailors, and was used for taking in or reefing sails. He, Paul seems to say of himself, had used no such reticence or reserve, but had gone on his course, as it were, before the wind, with all his canvas spread. (**Ed thought:** Interesting considering how Jesus described the work and ways of the Holy Spirit in Jn 3:8)

Recalling that Luke was a doctor, he may have used **hupostello** as a word play on the medical meaning of withholding food from patients. Figuratively speaking, Paul had never withheld spiritual food, but always sought to "set a full table" of the "whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27).

**THOUGHT** - Dear pastor or teacher, are there some "unpalatable" truths in God's Word that you have "withheld" for fear of causing offense (e.g., election, etc)? May we always strive to be imitators of Paul, even as he was of Christ (1Cor 11:1+), for neither withheld any "food" that they knew was necessary for "holistic" spiritual health. Indeed, we must hold back nothing that is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness." (2Ti 3:16+) Good preaching should comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. **Comfort the afflicted** — bring encouragement, hope, consolation, and gospel rest to those who are weary, wounded, grieving, repentant, or suffering. **Afflict the comfortable** — stir, confront, convict, unsettle, and awaken those who are complacent, self-satisfied, drifting, or hardened.

**Brian Bell** quips that Paul was "Not like some pastors who are "on weekdays invisible and on Sundays incomprehensible." Or the preacher who preaches cream, but he lives skim milk!" ([Sermon](#))

**Swindoll** - Ministers often struggle with intimidation. Certain people—most often those who are seen as successes in the secular arena—can easily intimidate God's servants who have left all to serve God full-time. Frankly, we're almost always caught off guard because we find it confusing. It's a perplexing, exasperating waste of time and energy that has no place in Christian work. Effective ministers learn not to back down.(Acts-Swindoll's Living Insights)

**Bob DeWaay** - Timothy was also ministering in Ephesus. It is clear that "all Scripture" is profitable and the Christian teacher and preacher should not avoid any of it. Though we may not be able to expound every single verse of the Bible in a lifetime (though surely a worthy goal), we should never avoid a verse or a topic for fear the audience might not like it. The whole counsel of God is relevant, applicable, and needful to every generation in every culture throughout the church age. There will be no situation in which it will be any less "profitable" than it was for those under Paul's and Timothy's ministries. May God give us grace, courage, tact, and insight as we set forth to proclaim the whole counsel of God. (Critical Issues Commentary)

**John Phillips** comments that in order "To know what Paul set before the Ephesian Christians we have to explore nearly all his epistles, but especially his epistle to the Ephesians. The teaching of Ephesians revolves around the Christian's **wealth, walk, and warfare.** (**Ed:** Eph 1-3 = Wealth, Eph 4-5 = Walk, Eph 6 = Warfare) Of all Paul's letters, his Ephesian letter climbs the highest heights, plunges to the deepest depths, embraces the profoundest truths. Paul kept nothing back. (John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**THOUGHT** - It is notable that **G. Campbell Morgan's** powerful ministry for the Lord began to prosper after he sequestered himself for two years with his Bible! Is it any wonder men like him had such impact on the lives of others? What did Morgan's blessed ministry focus on that was profitable? Teaching the Word of Truth in power! As I pen these notes, the year is 2012 and I am detecting a subtle trend (and I say this with a spirit of love and not a judgmental spirit) to either "change" or "replace" the actual words of Scripture when writing or preaching. Why? I am not absolutely sure, but it seems to be an attempt to make the Word of God more palatable, more "hip" or more "in step" with our common vernacular. We would all do well to imitate and emulate G Campbell

## SPIRITUALLY PROFITABLE

**Was profitable** (good, advantage, expedient)(4851)([sumphero](#) from **sún** = together + **phéro** = bring) means literally to bring together (literally - as in Acts 19:19+) and then **sumphero** came to mean to confer a benefit, to be profitable, to be advantageous (Mt. 5:29, 30; 18:6; 19:10; John 11:50; 16:7) or useful. The idea is to bring together for the benefit, profit or advantage of another. The essential idea of **sumphero** is anything that helps, creates an advantage, or confers a benefit. For example in Heb 12:10 **sumphero** describes the dividends of discipline, the profit of punishment, "so that we may share His holiness." **Paul** uses **sumphero** to describe another advantage of discipline declaring that "when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world." (1Co 11:32). Swindoll comments that here at Ephesus "Paul measured his every decision and action by how it would help the Ephesians. He was willing to try anything that would help them learn and grow: teaching in groups, in homes, one on one, publicly, privately—he overlooked no promising method." (Ibid)

**Gilbrant - Sumpherō** refers to the ultimate good and not necessarily the good of the present situation. For the apostle Paul the **spiritual benefit** became the touchstone for all experience (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). Whether it was knowledge, divine discipline, teaching and preaching, or gifts of the Spirit, it was all for the "highest good," not for temporal powers or favors (Acts 20:20; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 2 Corinthians 8:10; Hebrews 12:10).

**Teaching** (1321)(**didasko** from **dáo**= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun **didaskalia** and the adjective **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. In the 97 NT uses of **didasko** the meaning is virtually always to teach or instruct, although the purpose and content of the teaching must be determined from the context.

In Scripture to **teach** means to pass on the truth about the Word of God, the God of the Word and the faith of the saints, with the goal of influencing the understanding and stimulating obedience to the truth taught and resultant Spirit energized transformation and Christ-likeness. The essence of a **disciple** (mathetes, cp Jesus' clear command in Mt 28:18, 19, 20) in fact is that he or she is a learner, and also a "doer" (cp Jas 1:22+). The teacher teaches and the disciple hears and processes what is heard, so that this truth affects his or her innermost being (i.e., impacting not just the "head" but especially the "heart!"). Ultimately the purpose of **didasko** is to shape the will of the one taught, to cause it to be conformed to the will of God (cp Ro 12:2).

**John MacArthur** writes that **didasko** "refers to the passing on of information-often, but not necessarily, in a formal setting. It **focused on content**, with the purpose of discovering the truth-contrary to the forums so popular among Greeks, where discussion and the bantering about of various ideas and opinions was the primary concern (see Acts 17:21). Synagogue teaching, as illustrated by that of Jesus, was basically expository. Scripture was read and explained section by section, often verse by verse. ([MacArthur, J: Matthew 1-7 Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Bolding added)

**Publicly and from house to house** - This suggests that the church had both corporate meetings and home meetings. Paul taught in the synagogue (Acts 19:8) and also in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:10).

**From house to house** - Paul was surely one of the greatest preachers of all time and here we see that he preached from **house to house** not making his visits merely social calls, but always seeking to carry out His Lord's kingdom business (cp 1Cor 16:19).

**J Parker** has some interesting pensive comments on **house to house**...

One would like a record of his **house-to-house** talk. To have heard Paul speak on great themes in a little sphere would have been an education. What child has not been fascinated by seeing what appeared to be the whole sun inside a frail dewdrop? And what traveler has not paused a moment to see some kind star condescending enough to hide itself in the depth of a crystal well, as if it were shining in two heavens at once? To have seen Paul at the fireside, or to have heard him talking to some little child, or to have watched him at some bedside near the dying sufferer—to have heard his voice when it was attuned to the hearing of one listener alone!

**Men are seen in little things,  
on small occasions.**

This great Gospel will go anywhere, and be just the same whether drawn on a large scale or a little one.

**Do not be discouraged because you can only discharge a public ministry; and do not you be**

**discouraged because you can only discharge the house-to-house ministry.**

Each man has his own gift of God. Happy he who works his own gift and not another man's, and wise the people who, recognizing the one gift, do not bemoan the absence of other accomplishments.

**Acts 20:21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: [diamarturomenos](#) (PMPMSN) [Ioudaiois te kai Ellesin ten eis theon metanoian kai pistin eis ton kurion hemon Iesoun:](#)**

NLT Acts 20:21 I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike-- the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

KJV Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

ESV Acts 20:21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

ASV Acts 20:21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

CSB Acts 20:21 I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

NIV Acts 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

NKJ Acts 20:21 "testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

NRS Acts 20:21 as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus.

YLT Acts 20:21 testifying fully both to Jews and Greeks, toward God reformation, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Testifying:** Ac 20:24, 2:40 8:25, 18:5, 28:23, 1Jn 5:11-13
- **Jews:** Ac 18:4, 19:17 Ro 1:14 1Co 1:22
- **repentance:** Ac 2:38, 3:19, 11:18, 17:30, 26:20 Eze 18:30-32 Mt 3:2, 4:17, 21:31,32 Mk 1:15, 6:12 Lk 13:3,5, 15:7,10, 24:47 Ro 2:4 2Co 7:10 2Ti 2:25,26
- **faith:** Ac 10:43, 13:38,39, 16:31 Jn 3:15-18,36, 20:31, Ro 1:16, 3:22-26, 4:24 Ro 5:1, 10:9 Ga 2:16,20 3:22 1Jn 5:1,5,11-13
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SOLEMNLY TESTIFYING THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

**Solemnly testifying** (present tense = continually) ([1263](#)) ([diamarturomai](#) from **diá** = intensifies meaning conveying idea of "thoroughly" + **martúromai** = witness, bear witness) means to bear witness, to testify earnestly or repeatedly, to charge as if before witnesses (e.g., God and Christ Jesus), to exhort earnestly and with authority in matters of extraordinary importance (here the integrity of the Gospel message of **repentance** and **faith** he proclaimed). The solemnity of our testimony recognizes the serious danger of every soul not yet hidden in Christ, the "Ark" of eternal security. The first use of this verb is very telling for it comes from the lips of the rich man who ignored the cripple Lazarus and ended up in Hades which motivated him "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father (ABRAHAM), that you send him (LAZARUS) to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he **may warn** them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'(Lk 16:27-28+)

**Diamarturomai** - 15x - solemnly to testify(1), solemnly charge(3), solemnly testified(2), solemnly testifies(1), solemnly testifying(3), solemnly warned(1), solemnly witnessed(1), testified(1), testify solemnly(1), warn(1). Lk. 16:28; Acts 2:40; Acts 8:25; Acts 10:42; Acts 18:5; Acts 20:21; Acts 20:23; Acts 20:24; Acts 23:11; Acts 28:23; 1 Thess. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:21; 2 Tim. 2:14; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 2:6

**To both Jews and Greeks** (cf "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" - Ro 1:16+) - Every person was a "mission field" to Paul, for every person was in need of the Gospel of the grace of God. Are we "selective" in who we consider our mission field. Do we

consider some people like the "untouchables" in India? Paul's Gospel knew no bias or prejudice. And don't miss it -- even to the **Jews**, the very ones who plotted and persecuted Paul! (Acts 20:19) They needed the Gospel also! As Paul declared to the saints at Corinth...

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2Cor 5:20+)

## THE GOSPEL IN A NUTSHELL

**Repentance...faith** - Is this not Luke's "shorthand" for the **Gospel**? How dangerous it is to drop "repentance" from the proclamation! Dear pastor, have you jettisoned "repentance" because of some perverse, clever argument of a so called ivory tower Biblical scholar? If so, you had best return to the pattern proclaimed solemnly by the great apostle Paul and also by his Lord Who unapologetically proclaimed...

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** (present imperative) and **believe** (pisteuo = present imperative) in the Gospel." (Mark 1:15+, cp Mt 4:17, Lk 3:8+, Lk 5:32+, Lk 24:47+, Acts 26:20+, cp John the Baptist = Mt 3:2) (See also Spurgeon's comments below)

**Repentance** (3341)(**metanoia** from **meta** = after + **noéo** = to understand) literally means "afterthought" or "to think after" and thus comes to signify a change of mind. From the NT uses, it is clear that **metanoia** means not only a change of mind but includes a change of heart, attitude, interest, and direction. Repentance is the change wrought by God in one's heart when they realize that they have disobeyed His laws. **Metanoia** includes the idea of a **conversion** (from Latin "*convertere*" = to turn around, transform) in every sense of the word. Jesus' teaching would support this conclusion for our Lord declared...

I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who **repents** (**metanoëo**), than over ninety-nine righteous persons (speaking of "self" righteousness) who need no **repentance** (**metanoia**) (That is they "think" they need not truly repent!). (Luke 15:7+)

**Swindoll** declares that "The basic formula "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" is the bedrock message upon which everything else in Christian theology and practice builds." (Ibid) It follows that if you waffle on this truth, your whole doctrinal structure will be in danger of crumbling!

Near the end of Acts Paul reviewed his ministry before King Agrippa writing that he...

kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and **turn** (**epistrepho**) to God, performing deeds appropriate (**axios**) to repentance. (Acts 26:20+)

**Comment:** Notice that while deeds don't save anyone, deeds are evidence of the authenticity of one's repentance and faith. Faith alone saves, but the faith that truly saves is not alone! If we offer a watered down Gospel devoid of the truth of repentance, we may be guilty of offering "another gospel." (cf Gal 1:8-10+). The point is that repentance speaks of a change of mind and heart that effects a change in the direction of the course of one's life. If a person says "I believe in Jesus" and demonstrates absolutely no evidence of repentance, no evidence of a change in direction of their life, then there is no clear evidence of the change in their final destination, eternal punishment! The Gospel is not a "fire insurance policy" to keep us out of Hell, but a life transformation that even now brings heaven into our heart and prepares for our eternal home.

**Bishop Ryle** offers this descriptive definition of **repentance**...

**Repentance** is a thorough change of man's natural heart, upon the subject of sin. We are all born in sin. We naturally love sin. We take to sin, as soon as we can act and think—just as the bird takes to flying, and the fish takes to swimming. There never was a child that required schooling or education in order to learn deceitfulness, selfishness, passion, self-will, gluttony, pride, and foolishness. These things are not picked up from bad companions, or gradually learned by a long course of tedious instruction. They spring up of themselves, even when boys and girls are brought up alone. The seeds of them are evidently the natural product of the heart. The aptitude of all children to these evil things is an unanswerable proof of the corruption and fall of man. Now when this heart of ours is changed by the Holy Spirit, when this natural love of sin is cast out, then takes place that change which the Word of God calls "**repentance**." The man in whom the change is wrought is said to "repent." ([Repentance](#))

One of the best illustrations of **genuine repentance** is found in Paul's description of the **saints** at Thessalonica...

For they themselves (other believers in Macedonia and Achaia) report about us (Paul, Silvanus and Timothy) what kind of a reception we had with you, and **how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven**, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. (1Thessalonians 1:9; 1:10-See **notes** 1Th 1:9; 1:10)

**Comment:** Note the order - first, to God and by "default" from idols.

**C H Spurgeon** in a sermon entitled The Plumblin (Amos 7:7, 8) wrote that "Side by side with that **faith**, God puts **true repentance**. When a man attempts to convert his fellow-man, he gives him a sham repentance, or perhaps he tells him that there is no need of any repentance at all. Certain preachers have been telling us, lately, that it is a very easy matter to obtain salvation, and that there is no need of repentance; or if repentance is needed, it is merely a change of mind. That is not the doctrine that our fathers used to preach, nor the doctrine that we have believed. That faith, which is not accompanied by repentance, will have to be repented of; so, whenever God builds, he builds repentance fair and square with faith. These two things go together; the man just as much regrets and grieves over the past as he sees that past obliterated by the precious blood of Jesus. He just as much hates all his sin as he believes that his sin has been all put away. (Amos 7:7-8 The Plumblin)

**William MacDonald** remarks that "In many NT passages, faith alone is stated to be the condition of salvation. However, faith presupposes repentance. How could a person truly accept Jesus Christ as Savior unless he realized that he needed a Savior? This realization, brought about by the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit, is repentance. ([Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**Brian Bell** - Repentance and Faith must go together to complete each other like a door & its post.3.7.1. Repentance is the door which shuts out our sin. Faith is the post on which its hinges are fixed. A door w/o a doorpost to hang on...is not a door at all. A doorpost w/o the door hanging on it...is of no value whatever. "What God has joined together, let no man separate!" Repentance = turning from sin; Faith = trusting Christ for salvation. Let go of sin, lay hold of Christ! Patrick Morley writes that the church's integrity problem is in the misconception "that we can add Christ to our lives, but not subtract sin. It is a change in belief without a change in behavior." ([Sermon](#))

"Upon a life I did not live,  
Upon a death I did not die:  
Another's life, Another's death  
I stake my whole eternity!"

**Faith** (4102)(**pistis**) speaks of trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything. Here in Acts 20:21, Paul is speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to the God-Man Christ Jesus. Biblical faith (faith that saves a soul) is not simply mental assent to the truth one hears which by itself is a superficial "faith" at best and not genuine (saving) faith. I see a chair. I intellectually believe that it will hold me up. However, for my belief to be shown to be real, I need to sit in the chair.

**Ray Stedman** writes that...

Repentance is looking at the way you have been living -- at what you have been drawing upon, at your dependence upon the old life -- and changing your mind. That is what repentance means. To repent means to stop thinking and acting and living the way you have been. Instead, step out in faith. Trust the living Lord who is in you to operate through you, and venture out, move out!

The Christian life is intended to be exciting, compelling, always interesting, always different, always lived on the verge of adventure and danger. That is why it must be characterized by **faith**. So, you see, there are the two basic steps, and you must take them over and over again.

**The way you begin the Christian life is to repent and believe.  
And that also constitutes your walk through the Christian life.**

A walk is more than a single step. When faced with a situation, you should take the first step and repent, think through the old way of life and say to yourself, "I've been going at this the wrong way." But that is not yet a walk. You must take the next step and believe, have faith, trust in the work of God in you. Then, on the next occasion that comes, you go through the same procedure over again -- you repent, and then believe -- repent and believe -- repent and believe -- and you are walking! That is what the Christian life is all about. In every circumstance, every situation, this is the two-fold way by which the **Christian lives in the power of a living God**: repent and believe. Now the apostle goes on to give another characteristic of his ministry among them: ([Last Words](#))

**Related resources:**

- [Great quotes on repentance primarily from Puritan writers](#)
- Obedience of faith in commentary on Romans 1:5, See also [comments](#) on Romans 16:25
- Relationship of faith and obedience
- [What does the Bible say about repentance? What does it mean to repent?](#)
- [Why doesn't God give the fallen angels a chance to repent?](#)
- [What does it mean that today is the day of salvation?](#)
- [What is repentance and is it necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What is unrepentance? What does it mean to be unrepentant?](#)
- [Is repentance a change of mind or a turning from sin?](#)

**Wuest** explains that...

When these words (pistis, pisteuo, pistos) refer to the **faith** which a lost sinner must place in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, they include the following ideas;

the act of considering the Lord Jesus worthy of trust as to His character and motives,

the act of placing confidence in His ability to do just what He says He will do,

the act of entrusting the salvation of his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus,

the act of committing the work of saving his soul to the care of the Lord.

This means a definite taking of one's self out of one's own keeping and entrusting one's self into the keeping of the Lord Jesus.

For those of us who have genuinely been saved (justified) by God's grace through authentic faith, we need to remember that this same "faith" is what now sanctifies us! We tend to forget Paul's exhortation to the saints at Colossae "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Col 2:6+). How did they receive Him? By faith. How are they (and us) to walk in Him? By faith (2Cor 5:7+). Writing to the churches in Galatia, Paul ask them rhetorically...

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by **hearing with faith**? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected (brought to the goal of Christ-likeness) by the flesh? (Answer? Absolutely not!)...5 For we through the Spirit, **by faith**, are waiting for the hope of righteousness...7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying (not legalistically but enabled by the Spirit, by faith) the truth? (Gal 3:2, 3, 5:5, 7)

How are you doing in your sanctification process dear saint? Are you trying to please God with your own fleshly efforts? Remember, only Christ pleases the Father. Filled with His Spirit (the Spirit of Christ) (Eph 5:18+), practice walking by His Spirit, and then and only then, will you not carry out the desire of the flesh (Gal 5:16+). Only by abiding in the Vine by grace through faith will you be pleasing to God and bear fruit that will endure eternally (Jn 15:5, 8, 16).

**Maclaren** writes that

**Faith** is the hand that grasps. It is the means of communication, it is the channel through which the grace which is the life, or, rather, I should say, the life which is the grace, comes to us. It is the open door by which the angel of God comes in with his gifts. It is like the petals of the flowers, opening when the sunshine kisses them, and, by opening, laying bare the depths of their calyxes to be illuminated and coloured, and made to grow by the sunshine which itself has opened them, and without the presence of which, within the cup, there would have been neither life nor beauty. So faith is the basis of everything; the first shoot from which all the others ascend...**Faith works**. It is the foundation of all true work; even in the lowest sense of the word we might almost say that. But in the Christian scheme it is eminently the underlying requisite for all work which God does not consider as busy idleness...

**Your work of faith**. There is the whole of the thorny subject of the relation of faith and works packed into a nutshell. It is exactly what James said and it is exactly what a better than James said. When the Jews came to Him with their externalism, and thought that God was to be pleased by a whole rabble of separate good actions, and so said, 'What shall we do that we might work the works of God?' Jesus said, 'Never mind about Works. This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent,' and out of that will come all the rest. That is the mother tincture; everything will flow from that. So Paul says, 'Your work of faith.'

Does your faith work? Perhaps I should ask other people rather than you. Do men see that your faith works;

that its output is different from the output of men who are not possessors of a 'like precious faith'? Ask yourselves the question, and God help you to answer it. (Read full sermon on 1 Thessalonians 1:3)

**Wayne Grudem** defines **faith** that saves one's soul...

**Saving faith** is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. This definition emphasizes that saving faith is not just a belief in facts but personal trust in Jesus to save me... The definition emphasizes personal trust in Christ, not just belief in facts about Christ. Because saving faith in Scripture involves this personal trust, the word "trust" is a better word to use in contemporary culture than the word "faith" or "belief." The reason is that we can "believe" something to be true with no personal commitment or dependence involved in it. (Excerpt from [Systematic Theology](#) online - Scroll down to page 617 for the section entitled "I Must Decide to Depend on Jesus to Save Me Personally.") (Bolding added)

#### Related Resources:

- Multiple articles (Spurgeon, Ryle, Watson, Brooks, et al) @ [Saving Faith](#)
- Spurgeon's on belief [John 8:30-32 Believing On Jesus, And Its Counterfeits](#)
- Alexander Maclaren on [John 8:30, 31 Three Aspects of Faith](#)

#### Two Necessary Things for All

**I. Repentance** - A ladder of sorrow, by which we descend into the depths of our own hearts: it has three steps.

1. Knowledge of sin.
2. Sorrow for it.
3. Desire of salvation from it.

**II. Faith** - A heavenly ladder, on which we mount to God and eternity; it has also three steps.

1. Knowledge that the Redeemer has come.
2. Holy joy that He has taken up His abode with us.
3. Unshaken confidence in His saving grace. (Lisco)

Acts 20:22 "And now, **behold**, bound in **spirit** (or **Spirit**), I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there: [kai nun idou](#) (2SAMM) [dedemenos](#) (RPPMSN) [ego to pneumatī poreuomai](#) (1SPMI) [eis Ierousalem, ta en aute sunantesonta](#) (FAPNPA) [moi me eidos](#), (RAPMSN) :

GNT Acts 20:22 κα ν ν δο δεδεμ νος γ τ πνε ματι πορε ομαι ε ς ερουσαλ μ τ ν α τ συναντ σοντ μοι μ ε δ ς,

NLT Acts 20:22 "And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me,

KJV Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

ESV Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,

ASV Acts 20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

CSB Acts 20:22 "And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, bound in my spirit, not knowing what I will encounter there,

NIV Acts 20:22 "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

NKJ Acts 20:22 "And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

NRS Acts 20:22 And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will

happen to me there,

YLT Acts 20:22 'And now, lo, I -- bound in the Spirit -- go on to Jerusalem, the things that shall befall me in it not knowing,

- **Bound in spirit:** Acts 19:21, 21:11-14 Luke 9:51, 12:50 2Co 5:14
- **not:** Luke 18:31-33 Jn 13:1, 18:4 Jas 4:14, 2Pe 1:14
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL WAS A BOUND MAN!

We use a phrase "**bound and determined**" which [Webster](#) says means "having a very strong feeling that one is going to do something and not allow anyone or anything to get in the way : very determined." Paul was very focused and devoted to completing the particular task he had been assigned by the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:15-16+)

**And now** - Whenever you encounter an **expression of time**, be sure to question it (**5W/H'S**). Here Paul shifts from review of his **past practices** (summarized in Acts 20:18-21) to the **future prospects** that awaited him (Acts 20:22-27).

**Behold** ([2400](#))(**idou**) - This interjection should always arrest our attention. "Stop! Listen up" is the idea" in both the Old and the New Testaments. **Behold** always serves to emphasize what follows (and so it provides an opportunity to query the text -- Why? What are we to behold?, etc.)

**Bound in spirit** - The NAS does not capitalize "spirit" which reflects the interpretation of the translators that Luke is not referencing the Holy Spirit. However, several other translations favor this as a reference to the Holy Spirit and thus capitalize Spirit rendering Luke's phrase "**compelled by the Spirit**" (NET, NIV, NAB) or "**constrained by the Spirit**" (ESV).

**Craig Keener** - One might interpret "bound in spirit" as "bound by his [own] spirit," but Luke's usage and the immediate context decisively favor reading this as "bound by the Spirit"—that is, God's Spirit. When Luke uses "spirit" without qualification he normally means the Holy Spirit (see comment on Acts 18:25; Acts 19:21), and in context, "bound in Spirit" means something like "bound, as the Holy Spirit testifies" (Acts 20:23); thus in Acts 21:11 the Holy Spirit testifies through a prophet that Paul will be "bound" in Jerusalem. As Paul had once "bound" Christians (9:2, 14, 21) and as Peter was once "bound" in chains (12:6), so would Paul experience the shame of being "bound" (deo, Acts 21:11, 13, 33; 22:5, 29; 24:27). "Bonds" (Acts 20:23) now awaited the one who was "bound" by the Spirit (Acts 20:22). This is probably a wordplay; the **perfect** participle for "**bound**" probably suggests antecedent action, which, in the context of Acts, likely refers to when Paul "purposed" or "resolved" by the Spirit in Acts 19:21.(Acts-An Exegetical Commentary).

**Bound** ([1210](#))(**deo**) literally meant to tie objects together and figuratively could refer to confining someone in prison (Mk 15:7) or to cause someone to be under authority of someone or something else (Ro 7:2+). The **NLT** paraphrase gives us the sense of what Paul meant by **bound in spirit** rendering it as "drawn there irresistibly" and the **perfect tense** indicates that this was Paul's permanent state. This is not surprising for he repeatedly referred to himself as a **bondservant** (doulos) and as one who **served** (douleuo) his Lord (Acts 20:19), both words originating from **deo**. In short Paul was a man irrevocably and intimately bound to Christ Jesus His Master. Paul as the Lord's bondservant conveys the idea of his close tie to Jesus his Lord, his acknowledgement that he belonged to Him and his desire to lovingly do His master's will. In short, the will of Paul the "bound one" was consumed in the will of his Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. Whether by the Spirit or his own spirit, Paul was constrained by a compulsion which he could not "shake" that he was to continue on to Jerusalem

**THOUGHT** - **Swindoll** elaborates on **bound** - Somewhere along his journey, Paul learned that his own desire was, in fact, a prompting by the Holy Spirit. A desire became a **need**; the need grew into a **passion**; now the passion had become an **obsession**. (I mean "obsession" in the best way. People who have experienced a clear call of the Spirit experience His leading as a single-minded compulsion to do as He directs." What about you beloved? Are you a "**bound**" man or woman? Would you call yourself the Lord's bondservant? Are you allowing the Holy Spirit compel your spirit? Is your will consumed and subsumed by His good and acceptable and perfect will? Yield to the Spirit of Christ. Heed His invitation (He is speaking to the church!) Take Jesus' yoke. Abide in Him as your sustaining, invigorating Vine (Jn 15:5+) and live life to the full just as did the apostle Paul, a bound man!

**On my way to Jerusalem** (see [map](#)) - The NET Bible Notes that "This journey to Jerusalem suggests a parallel between Paul and Jesus, since the "Jerusalem journey" motif figures so prominently in Luke's Gospel" (cp "set His face to go to Jerusalem" Lk 9:51KJVff+)

**Knowing** (1492)(**eido**) is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in believers is given by the Holy Spirit. **Eido/oida** suggests a fullness of knowledge, an absolute knowledge which is beyond a shadow of a doubt. In this case Paul did not know the specific details but as he states in the next verse, he knew the general tenor of what he would encounter -- "**bonds and afflictions!**" The prophecy of Agabus in Acts 21:10, 11 would give Paul more specific details of the persecution awaiting him in Jerusalem.

## NOT KNOWING

### G Campbell Morgan...

This phrase from the lips of Paul reveals one of the things that, through very varied experience, he had come to know. He knew that there were things in his program that he did not know. Locally, the phrase was expressive of uncertainty as to the reception he would receive in Jerusalem.

But its chief value for us lies in the fact that it is so used as to show that such ignorance did not interfere with the certainties of the future.

He had received a ministry from the Lord Jesus, and the one and only thing that concerned him was that he should accomplish (finish) that ministry (Acts 20:24). What lay in the course (the race), of bonds or affliction, or even death, mattered nothing; the doing of the appointed work was supreme (**Ed**: But don't misinterpret this Paul's doing, for Paul's **doing** was always a fruit of his **being**, his abiding in the Vine, an outgrowth of the enabling power of the Spirit of Christ energizing Christ's life in and through him). Thus there is the touch of a splendid carelessness in the words "**not knowing**"; a carelessness as to minor matters, born of a constant carefulness as to the principal matter (**Ed**: In other words the **minor** was ever overshadowed by the **major**). Thus the "**not knowing**" of Paul meant not caring to know, not asking to know; indeed, it meant preferring not to know. That is the true attitude of all who are walking in an appointed course, in the service of the Lord. We know **Whose we are** and **Whom we serve**. (**Ed**: Note the order - first *Whose we are* then *Whom we serve*. **Being** should always precedes **doing**.) We know the way of His will for us. As to the rest, we can say **not knowing**; and that is the ignorance of a perfect rest (cp Mt 11:28-30+). (Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible)

Acts 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me: [plen hoti to pneuma to hagion kata polin diamarturetai](#) (3SPMI) [moi legon](#) (PAPNSN) [oti desma kai thlipseis me menousin.](#) (3PPAI) :

NET Acts 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit warns me in town after town that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.

GNT Acts 20:23 πλ ν τι τ πνε μα τ γιον κατ π λιν διαμαρτ ρετα μοι λ γον τι δεσμ κα θλ ψεις με μ νουσιν.

NLT Acts 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead.

KJV Acts 20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

ESV Acts 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

ASV Acts 20:23 save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

CSB Acts 20:23 except that in town after town the Holy Spirit testifies to me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me.

NIV Acts 20:23 I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

NKJ Acts 20:23 "except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

NRS Acts 20:23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me.

YLT Acts 20:23 save that the Holy Spirit in every city doth testify fully, saying, that for me bonds and tribulations remain;

- **Holy Spirit:** Acts 9:16, 14:22, 21:4,11 Jn 16:33 1Th 3:3 2Ti 2:12
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**“Through many tribulations  
we must enter the kingdom of God.”**

**Acts 14:22**

**The Holy Spirit solemnly testifies** - Paul knew that difficult times of testing were coming. Subsequent history would prove Paul had about 10 more years before Nero beheaded him (the tradition most accept). The Holy Spirit, speaking to the original readers (by application to all disciples of Christ) of Peter's first epistle warns us...

Beloved, **do not be surprised** (present imperative = a command with negative = don't let this start happening or stop an action already occurring) at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you **share the sufferings of Christ** (cp Col 1:24+), keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation (Read Mt 5:10-12+; Php1:29+; Php 3:10+; Ro 8:17+, 2Co 1:7, 4:10+). If you are reviled (reproached, insulted, slandered, assailed with abuse) for the name of Christ (Note this "qualifying" caveat!), you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. (1Pe 4:12, 13+, 1Pe 4:14+)

**Solemnly testifies** (present tense = continually) ([1263](#)) see notes above on [diamarturomai](#)

**The Holy Spirit** - Observe that the Holy Spirit spoke to Paul. I think we do the Spirit and ourselves a disservice to think He would not desire to speak to us as well!

**THOUGHT** - Lord give us ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church, Christ's Body, in these last days. Amen (See this phrase used 7 times by Jesus speaking to the church! - Rev 2:7, 11, 17, [29+](#), Rev 3:6, 13, [22+](#))

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9+, cp Acts 16:7, Php 1:19+, Gal 4:6), the One Jesus referred to as "another (allos = of the same kind) Helper" (Jn 14:16). Jesus had ascended in Acts 1 but His kingdom work was far from finished. Therefore in Acts 2, the Spirit of Jesus had descended to empower (cp Acts 1:8+) the work of Christ through His body, the Church. Church, notice how we began!

**THOUGHT** - How are we doing today Church, Body of Christ? Is the Church in America relying on the same power that fueled the spread of the Gospel in the book of Acts? If not why not? And should we be surprised if we are not radically impacting our godless progressively corrupting American culture? Beloved, we began by Jesus' sending of His Holy Spirit and we must run by that same Spirit! (Beloved if you are unsure how you would answer this question, consider reading Francis Chan's thoughtful challenge to the modern church in his book - [Forgotten God Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit](#) - but be a Berean as he has a few statements you need to check closely with Scripture)

**Related Resources:**

- [1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Commentary](#)
- [1 John 4:4 Commentary](#)
- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)
- [Acts 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [Expulsive Power of a New Affection](#)
- [Galatians 5:16 Commentary](#)
- [Illumination of the Bible](#)
- [Loving Obedience-Obedient Love](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

**THE GOSPEL:**

## NEVER CHANGING NEVER LESSENING.

**Joseph Parker** comments on the phrase **in every city "In every city—bonds—afflictions."** What a tribute to the sustaining power of the doctrine he had taught! The bonds were many, the afflictions were heavy; what outweighed them all? The sense of God's presence and God's favor. If one thing above another has been demonstrated by Christian history, it is that the Christian spirit may be so vital in a man as to make him forget all care and pain and labour and sorrow, and make him triumph and glory in tribulation also. What comforted Paul will comfort us. This is the eternal quantity of the **Gospel—never changing, never lessening.**

## SECRET OF THE BLESSED CHRISTIAN LIFE

**F B Meyer** writes that "The secret of a blessed Christian experience is to live in the power of this truth, that the Holy Spirit is literally the Lord, as He is the Giver, of Life (cp Jn 6:63). Sometimes He will direct us towards individuals, as when He said unto Philip, " Go near, and join thyself to this chariot " (Acts 8:29+); at other times, we shall be bound in the Spirit to go up unto Jerusalem, knowing that bonds and afflictions await us, **but not able to draw back** (Acts 20:22-23). The note and mark of His Rule are always the crucifixion of the self-life to the glorification of the Christ-life, and the combination of circumstances, which lock with His inspirations, as the wards of a lock with its key. Whether to act or rest, whether to speak or be still, whether to go in or go out, all will be made clear by the witness and leading of the Spirit in the depths of our heart." (The Creed of Creeds) Notice Meyer is not saying "Let go and let God," but "Let God and let's go!"

**Afflictions** (2347) (**thlipsis** from **thlibo** = to crush, press together, squash, hem in, compress, squeeze in turn derived from **thláo** = to break) originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man. **Thlipsis** is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. Medically **thlipsis** was used of the pulse (pressure). Thlipsis was used to describe the pressing together as of grapes and thus conveys the picture of being squeezed or placed under pressure or crushed beneath a weight! When, according to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, this was literally **thlipsis**. The iron cage was **stenochoria**. **Thlipsis** thus refers not to mild discomfort but to great difficulties, something Paul experienced **in every city!**

As **Joseph Alleine** said "Times of affliction are usually gaining times to God's people."

When we as children of God stray, as a loving Father, He disciplines us. In times like these affliction is God's shepherd dog to drive us back to the fold. And while we may not like the afflictions at the moment, in time we come to be thankful for His afflictions which are often His best blessings sent in disguise! Indeed, someone has well said that our great Teacher writes many a bright lesson on the "blackboard of affliction."

**The Puritan writer Thomas Brooks** said it well...Stars shine brightest in the darkest night. Torches are the better for beating. Grapes come not to the proof till they come to the press. Spices smell sweetest when pounded. Young trees root the faster for shaking. Vines are the better for bleeding. Gold looks the brighter for scouring; and juniper smells sweeter in the fire.

**Spurgeon** echoes Brooks thoughts...I am afraid that all the grace that I have got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours might almost lie on a penny. But the good that I have received from my sorrows, and pains, and griefs, is altogether incalculable. What do I not owe to the crucible and the furnace, the bellows that have blown up the coals, and the hand which has thrust me into the heat?...Our troubles have always brought us blessings, and they always will. They are the dark chariots of bright grace....The tears of affliction are often needed to keep the eye of faith bright.

In **Jesus'** last words to His disciples He too spoke of the great "affliction" (the Cross) He would soon face and encouraged His men who would soon also experience afflictions for the sake of His Name...

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation (**thlipsis**), but **take courage** (present imperative - command to make this attitude their lifestyle - How possible? They would soon have Another Helper, implying that Jesus had been their "Helper", and the Holy Spirit would strengthen them in their inner manner with power - Acts 1:8+, Eph 3:16+) ; I have overcome the world."

**Comment:** Beloved, let us hear and take to heart, Paul's example of facing afflictions and Jesus' warning and encouragement regarding coming affliction. The Christian life is not a picnic, but a war. We have three inveterate moral enemies - the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**. Paul in his last recorded words gave Timothy a prophetic promise which was also a warning of coming afflictions declaring "indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Ti 3:12+)

**Acts 20:24 "But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the Gospel of the grace of God: all' oudenos logou poioumai (1SPMI) ten psuchen timian emauto os teleiosai (AAN) ton dromon mou kai ten diakonian en elabon (1SAAI) para tou kuriou Iesou, diamarturasthai (AMN) to euaggelion tes charitos tou theou.:"**

NET Acts 20:24 But I do not consider my life worth anything to myself, so that I may finish my task and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.

GNT Acts 20:24 ἄλλ' οὐδενὸς λόγου ποιοῦμαι τὴν ψυχὴν τιμᾶν ἑαυτοῦ ὥστε τελειῶσαι τὴν ὁρμὸν μου κατὰ τὴν διακονίαν ἣν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, διαμαρτυρασθαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ.

NLT Acts 20:24 But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus-- the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God.

KJV Acts 20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

ESV Acts 20:24 But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

ASV Acts 20:24 But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

CSB Acts 20:24 But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

NIV Acts 20:24 However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

NKJ Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

NRS Acts 20:24 But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.

YLT Acts 20:24 but I make account of none of these, neither do I count my life precious to myself, so that I finish my course with joy, and the ministrations that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify fully the good news of the grace of God.

My Amplified Paraphrase "But I do not consider my life (I do not account my life as having any value or priority) as dear to myself (precious, of supreme worth), if only I may finish (bring to completion, fulfill to the end) my course (my race, the path God has appointed) and the ministry (service, stewardship entrusted to me) which I received (took as a gift, received from Another, not created by myself) from the Lord Jesus, to testify (to solemnly witness, declare emphatically) to the gospel (the good news of God's saving grace) of the grace of God (His undeserved favor, mercy, and power freely given). For Paul, life itself was expendable; finishing the race and fulfilling the assignment Christ had entrusted to him was everything."

- **I do not consider my life** Ac 21:13 Ro 8:35-39 1Co 15:58 2Co 4:1,8,9,16-18, 6:4-10, 7:4, 12:10 Eph 3:13 1Th 2:2, 3:3 2Ti 1:12, 3:11 4:17 Heb 10:34, 12:1-3
- **Account:** 2Co 5:8 Php 1:20-23, 2:17, Col 1:24 1Jn 3:16 Rev 12:11
- **might:** Jn 17:4 1Co 9:24-27 Php 3:13-15 2Ti 4:6-8
- **and the ministry:** Ac 1:17, 9:15, 22:21 26:17,18 1Co 9:17,18 2Co 4:1 Ga 1:1 Titus 1:3
- **testify solemnly:** Ac 20:21 Jn 15:27 Heb 2:3,4
- **Gospel of the grace of God:** Ac 14:3 Luke 2:10,11 Ro 3:24-26, 4:4, 5:20,21, 11:6 Eph 1:6, 2:4-10 Titus 2:11, 3:4-7 1Pe 5:12
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## THE SECRET OF PAUL'S STRONG FINISH

2Ti 4:7+

**But** (term of contrast) should always prompt at least one question - What is being contrasted? (Why?, etc). In the present context, Paul is contrasting the reality of the certainty of "**bonds and afflictions**" with the reality of his attitude of accepting whatever the good hand of the Lord brings. This is clearly the heart of one who knows that he is not his own but has been bought with the price of the precious blood of Christ and that the purpose of his life is now to glorify God (1Cor 6:19+, 1Cor 6:20+, Titus 2:14+, 1Pe 1:18, 19+, Mt 5:16+) And as we read about Paul, we need to remember his charge to the believers in Corinth (and by application to us today) to

**Be** (present imperative = command to make this one's lifestyle, something possible only as we yield to and are enabled by the Holy Spirit) imitators of me, just as I am of Christ." (1Cor 11:1+)

**Will imitating Paul and Jesus involve suffering for the Name above all names?** It is a guarantee, but enabled by the same Spirit Who empowered Paul, we must not shrink from the high and holy call upon each of our lives! (Cp 2Ti 3:12+, Phil 1:29+) You are not really ready to live for Christ until you are willing to die for Christ.

### Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [1 Corinthians 11:1 Commentary](#)
- [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)

## TO LIVE = CHRIST TO DIE = GAIN

Php 1:21+

**I do not consider my life** ([psuche](#)) **of any account** ([logos](#)) **as dear** ([timios](#)) **to myself** - "I do not consider my life worth anything to myself" (NET), "But I count my life of no value to myself" (HCSB), "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself" (ESV), "But I do not place any value on my own life." (NJB). For a similar sentiment by Paul see 2Cor 4:7-12+, 2Cor 6:4-10+, 2Cor 12:9, 10+, Php 1:20, 21+, Php 2:17+, Php 3:8+, Col 1:24+. Paul knew he was not his own, but that his life belonged to Jesus in Whose hands he was a "**chosen instrument**." (Acts 9:15+). Oh, for all of God's possessions to possess such a passionate persuasion! Paul presents a proper perspective for our short life on earth!

**My life** ([psuchē](#)) is literally "my soul!" Paul uses [psuchē](#) not merely to refer to his physical existence, but to refer to his whole self, his life, his desires, his ambitions, his comforts, and his personal preservation. In essence, Paul was saying "My own life, with all its plans, comforts, dreams, and security, is not what I'm living for." He understood and lived what he had written to the saints at Corinth that his "body (was) a temple of the Holy Spirit Who (was in him), Whom (he had) from God, and that (he was) not (his) own," having "been bought with a price" so that now his chief purpose in life was to "glorify God in (his) body." (1Co 6:19-20+) To Paul, life was not something to grasp but something to surrender for the sake of His Lord. Paul used [psuchē](#) in much the same way as did Jesus' in Luke 9:24+ "Whoever wishes to save his **life** ([psuchē](#)) will lose it, but whoever loses his **life** ([psuchē](#)) for My sake will save it." Paul was willing to lose his life ([psuchē](#)) for Jesus' sake. Paul consciously, continually lived a crucified life (Gal 2:20+), leaving all believers of all ages a pattern to imitate (1Co 11:1+). How are you doing?

**Of any account** ([logos](#)) is the familiar word "logos" as essentially an "accounting term" by which Paul was saying he placed no worth on his own life, compared to the mission Christ had given him. To put it another way, Paul affirmed that his own life was not something to be preserved, protected, or held tightly when compared with the surpassing value of Christ's calling (cf Php 3:7-9+).

**As dear** ([timios](#)) **to myself** - The word Paul chose for "dear" is [timios](#) which means precious, valuable, highly honored, worthy of protection, and was often used of treasured stones, costly possessions, or something treated with great care. Paul, by putting it in a negative statement ("I do not"), was saying his life was not his treasured possession. His life was not his "cherished possession" and he refused to make it an idol for his own comfort and gain, instead willingly and freely surrendering it to the will of Christ. He embodied his conviction "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21+), placing Christ's calling above every instinct toward

self-preservation.

*Nothing, absolutely nothing  
deters Paul from his holy purpose!*

**Albert Barnes** comments that what Paul is saying in essence is that "Duty is of more importance than life; and when either duty or life is to be sacrificed, life is to be cheerfully surrendered."

**John Phillips** comments that "because of his resolve to go to Jerusalem, much of his remaining time would be spent in prison. Paul, however, looked at life from a higher perspective than most of us. Self-preservation was not high on his list of priorities. He was prepared to lose both liberty and life itself in the cause of Christ. As he had told the Romans in his recent letter, he considered himself "killed all the day long" for the cause of Christ, accounting himself "as a sheep for the slaughter" (Ro 8:36+). The important thing was to fulfill the ministry entrusted to him and to bear universal witness in life or death, to Jew and Gentile, to the good news of the grace of God. (Ibid)

**John Piper** comments "Any constellation of goals that you choose to live for will leave a craving vacuum in your soul if GOD is not the pole star in that constellation guiding and shaping all your choices. God was the lodestar of Paul's life, and the glory of God was the light of that immense and blazing star, and all the other aims of his life were like moons whose only light and attraction were the light they reflected of that star. ([A Cause to Live For - Desiring God](#))

**Chuck Smith** comments on not considering his **life** of any **account as dear**...

Very few can make the statement that Paul made, for most of us do count our lives dear to ourselves. We want to hang on to life as long as possible. We exercise, take pills, so as to prolong our life. We even spend thousands of dollars a day to put our loved ones on life support systems so that we can keep them technically alive, long after they have really died, because we count life so dear....

**Why is it that we count our lives dear?** Because we have no concept of how wonderful heaven is. This is reflected in our attitude toward a Christian who has died, especially if it is a young person or a child. We somehow feel that they were cheated for they died before they had a chance to really experience life. Yes, they have missed out on so much grief, pain, sorrow, trials, pressure, fear, anxiety. There they are in the total bliss of heaven, where there are no tears, sorrow or pain, enjoying the eternal pleasures, poor souls. Think of all they have missed. ([Chuck Smith - Sermon Notes](#))

## ONE LIFE TO LIFE ONE RACE TO RUN

**So that** in this context expresses purpose. Paul is giving us the purpose why his physical life did not matter. He now presents the primary motive of his life, his main objective! What mattered was that he might carry out the task God had given him, no matter what the cost!

**I may finish** ([teleioo](#)) **my course** ([dromos](#) - a "racecourse" designed by God Himself and uniquely marked out for Paul) - Note the personal possessive pronoun "**my**" indicating it was the course he possessed because it was the course or race God had ordained for him to run in and to finish (cf "I received it from the Lord Jesus"). Every runner has a unique "lane." Paul's [dromos](#) was Paul's and not Peter's or Apollos'. Your race is not identical to anyone else's race. God marks it out specifically for you (cf Heb 12:1+ "the race that is set before you.") Paul did not choose it but was gifted this race by the Lord. This teaches the important principle that ministry for the Lord is not something we choose or achieve, but something He gives us! One other point is that a race is not a cakewalk but involves a little "holy sweat," pain, hurdles, and discipline (1Co 9:28+).

**I may finish** expresses Paul's earnest desire to bring this race to its intended end, to fully accomplish the work the Lord had given him (cf Jesus Jn 4:34+ with Jn 17:4+ using [teleioo](#) for accomplish in both verses) and to finish it WELL rather than just finishing, so that he might not just hear "Done!" but "WELL done!" (Mt 25:23+) Beloved, it is not how we start but how we finish. Paul would have shouted "Amen" to Puritan **Richard Baxter** who said "He that would die **WELL** must learn to live **WELL**; and he that would live **WELL** must oft think of dying **WELL**."

**THOUGHT** - God grant by His Spirit and His Word that each of us reading Acts might be able to sincerely say "The only thing that matters is crossing the finish line of the race God assigned to me, fully faithful, completely spent, with nothing held back, all for His glory, and all possible through His Son. Amen."

**And the ministry** ([diakonia](#)) **which I received from the Lord Jesus** - Note that the word Paul uses for **ministry** ([diakonia](#)) carried the nuances of waiting on tables, doing menial tasks, and serving others at personal cost. **Ministry** ([diakonia](#)) from the Lord placed Paul under the weight of A holy obligation, making him accountable not to men but to Christ Himself—the One before Whom he

longed to be found faithful as a trustworthy ([pistos](#)) steward ([oikonomos](#)) (1Co 4:1-2+) **I received from the Lord Jesus** means Paul accepted what was handed to him. To reiterate a point discussed earlier, **I received** implies that his ministry was not self-chosen, but sovereignly placed into his hands (cf. Gal 1:15–16+). His ministry was not self-made, not a ministry he built (e.g., because of his reputation! Woe!) His ministry was not self-directed. In other words, Paul did not set the agenda but accepted Christ's agenda (cf Acts 16:7-9,10+) Since his ministry was a gift it became a stewardship. The phrase **from the Lord Jesus** emphasizes the authority of the ministry rested in Christ's Lordship, Who called (Acts 9:1-5,6+), Who assigned (Acts 26:16, 17,18+), Who empowered (Col 1:29+, 1Co 15:10+), and Who would one day evaluate and reward (2Co 5:9,10+).

**To testify solemnly ([diamarturomai](#)) of the Gospel ([euaggelion](#)) of the grace ([charis](#)) of God** - Paul's charge from the Lord Jesus is not simply to "share" the Gospel (it is of course that) but even more to **testify solemnly ([diamarturomai](#))** which means to bear witness emphatically, to testify with deep seriousness, to declare with authority, to warn earnestly, to affirm truth under divine obligation and to give a solemn, Spirit-emboldened witness (cf Acts 4:31+). In short [diamarturomai](#) is courtroom language, as if Paul was sworn in as a witness for Christ and is under divine compulsion to speak the truth boldly, clearly, and urgently. This verb also implies that silence would be sin (not "golden"), because the One who commissioned Paul (and us) expects faithful proclamation. In 1 Cor 9:16+ Paul wrote "if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; **for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.**"

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, to testify solemnly is not optional—it is the sacred charge laid upon every believer, for [hell is real](#) and its unspeakable torments unending. To shrink back from boldly declaring the truth is not merely unfortunate; it is a tragic withholding of the **ONLY** message that can rescue eternal souls from eternal punishment. Let me ask you gently, but honestly: Have you solemnly spoken the Gospel with anyone this week? This month? This year? Ever? Beloved, this is our calling—our God-given responsibility—for hell is long and silence is tragic. Of all the things we can do on earth but cannot do in heaven, one stands supremely above the rest: **we cannot evangelize the lost in heaven, for there will be no lost there.** The opportunity to speak Christ to perishing souls exists only now, in this brief earthly moment (Jas 4:14+). Therefore, let us not waste the privilege but proclaim the Gospel while we have breath, for eternity hangs in the balance. May the Spirit of the Living God grant each of us holy boldness to "Conduct ourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity, letting our speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that we will know how we should respond to each person. In the Name above all names. Amen (Col 4:5-6+)

To "**testify solemnly of the Gospel of the grace of God**" means to declare with holy urgency and divine authority the life-transforming truth that salvation is entirely the gift of God's grace through the finished work of Christ.

**I may finish (5048)** ([teleioo](#) related to [teleios](#) from [telos](#) = an end, a purpose, an aim, a goal, consummate soundness, idea of being whole) means to accomplish or bring to an end or to the intended goal ([telos](#)), the goal of which in the case of Paul and all believers is **Christ-likeness**. And fittingly, in Hebrews 12:2+, Jesus is designated as "the Author and **Perfecter** of the faith" where Perfecter is [teleiotes](#), the Completer, the One Who reached the goal so as to win the prize so to speak. [Teleioo](#) thus means to be complete, mature, fully developed, full grown, brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness. It does not mean simply to terminate something but to carry it out until fully finished (this thought is conveyed by the translation "perfected").

**My course** (my race) ([dromos](#)) - The phrase "**my course**" indicates Paul understood and took possession of the truth that this was his own race, not someone else's race. Not only does "**my course**" indicate **my possession** but also connotes **my responsibility** to run the race God has laid out for each of us.

**THOUGHT** - Do you see your short life (in light of eternity) as a race to be run for an eternal prize to be won? If not, then perhaps you need to ponder the brevity of life and the length of eternity. How foolish to waste our life on what is guaranteed to pass away, in lieu of storing up for ourselves eternal treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-21+). Read [Redeem the time](#) and then redeem the time you have left. Moses praying "So teach us to number **our days**, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom." (Ps 90:12). We tend to evaluate our life in years (e.g., birthdays)! We need to recognize **each day** as a gift from God and buy up every second of that day as the Spirit gives us supernatural leading and energy to carry out!

[Adoniram Judson](#) a famous missionary to Burma wrote that "A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity... the same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever... each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny... How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, (enabled by God's Spirit) resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly (forever) marked." Let it be so in our lives for Thy great glory. Amen

Watch [Francis Chan's excellent illustration](#) of the shortness of your life in light of the length of eternity!

Note well that each believer has a "custom course" specifically designed by God Himself (this meaning is clearly conveyed in the phrase "**the race that is set before us**" in Heb 12:1+) and that is the "lane" in which we are to run **for His glory** (cp "good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" - Eph 2:10+). In other words, God has a "lane" for each of His children to run in and a goal for each one to reach. We are **not** competing with each other. We are competing (in a sense) with ourselves (e.g., under grace denying self, cp Mk 8:34, 35+) and striving to press on toward the goal for the prize God has set before us (cp Php 3:14+). Remember, we are not running the race in order to get into heaven. It is only through faith in Jesus Christ that our sins are forgiven and we have the assurance of heaven (Jn 14:1-6+). In the Greek and Roman games, the contestants had to be citizens and no slaves or outsiders were permitted to compete. In the Christian race, each runner is already a citizen of heaven (Php 3:20+) and is running to bring glory to the Lord. (Mt 5:16+)

**THOUGHT** - Take a moment and meditate on Paul's metaphorical descriptions of our life and ministry in Christ as a race we are to run in such a way that we win -

- 1 Cor 9:24-27+ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.
- Gal 2:2+ It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.
- Gal 5:7+, You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?
- Php 2:16+ holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.
- Php 3:13, 14+ Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.
- 2 Ti 4:7+ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;
- Heb 12:1+ (not Paul but related truth) Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

**Finish my course with joy** - The Greek Textus Receptus has "*meta charas*" which the KJV translates "with joy." (Acts 20:24KJV) This phrase is not found in more modern Greek texts and thus is not translated in the NAS, ESV, etc.

**My course (my race)** (1408)(**dromos** from **dramein**, the aorist infinitive form of **trecho** = to run) refers to the course that one follows in a race and figuratively refers to one's purpose in life and obligations in relation to it. Our lives are represented as a race that is to be run, not a party to be celebrated. Inherent in the picture of our **life as a race** are ideas like intentionality, continuity, diligence, effort, counting of the cost, denial of self, etc.

**THOUGHT** - The question we all need to ask ourselves is "Am I running well?" Do you see yourself like Paul as a runner who desires to finish well, to finish with joy? "Have I laid aside every encumbrance (unnecessary weight or baggage = anything that impedes disciplining myself for godliness 1Ti4:7,8+), and the sin which so easily entangles" me so that I might be able to "run with endurance the race that is set before" me? (He 12:1+) And most importantly am I continually fixing my eyes on my great Example, Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of the faith (Heb 12:2+)?

May God grant us His Spirit's supernatural grace to enable us to say like Paul...

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course (**dromos**), I have kept the faith in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2Ti 4:7+, 2Ti 4:8+)

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul had issued another strong warning using which also used an athletic metaphor...

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 25 And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I

box in such a way, as not beating the air; 27 but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified. (1Co 9:24+, 1Co 9:25+, 1Co 9:26+, 1Co 9:27+)

#### Related Resources:

- The Heavenly Race by Thomas Watson
- [The Unwearied Runner by C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Redeem the Time for the Days are Evil](#)
- [Making the Most of Your Time](#)
- [Maximizing your Spiritual Opportunities God Gives You](#)
- [Redeem the Time](#)

Many believers start out on the right **course**, but with time are diverted from the track God originally set them on. When we are born into God's kingdom our race begins and our course is set and one day when we enter God's presence our race ends. The interval of our brief sojourn on earth is the time we each have to complete our set spiritual **course**. If we stray from our **course** we lose valuable time. The only way to complete our course within the allotted time is to stay on course! Don't be like the Galatians of whom Paul said

You were running well; who hindered (NIV "cut in on") you from obeying the truth? (Gal 5:7)

Paul's life would have pleased the track coach who said "If you have anything left ten yards past the finish line, you didn't give your all." What about us? Each of our lives are "like flowering grass" and will soon "pass away" (Jas 1:10+) which should motivate us like Paul to give no less than our best to the Lord.

**Jack Arnold** - The Apostle Paul mastered the question of values. Not even life itself was more valuable than being faithful to Christ, according to Paul. For Paul, the ultimate value was carrying out the will of God in his life. Every Christian must settle this issue of values whether he is a doctor, lawyer, engineer, teacher, plumber, carpenter or housewife. The ultimate value is to do the will of God. Any other value must be subservient to being faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. What are your values? To get a husband or wife? To be a success in business? To be a millionaire? To make some significant scientific discovery to benefit mankind? To write some scholarly work which will shake the world? The Bible says the only value worth having is to glorify God and to manifest Christ in one's life by doing the will of God. Situations often change our value system as humans. **This is well illustrated in the life of one woman who was aboard the passenger ship, Titanic, in 1912 when it hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic and stayed afloat for about four hours before sinking.** In that sinking, about 1,000 people lost their lives. As the ship was sinking, the women and children were being put on lifeboats. One woman was given a seat on one of the lifeboats, and she asked for three minutes to go back to her cabin and get something. She was granted permission. By this time the ship was listing badly. As she made her way to the cabin, there were diamond rings and bracelets, fur coats, expensive clothing and precious jewels sliding across the deck of the ship. She hurriedly went by these expensive possessions and picked up a sack. She reached her hand and pulled out three oranges. She stuffed the oranges in her coat and went back to the lifeboat. The situation had changed the woman's values. Now oranges were more valuable than diamonds. If you knew you only had a few months, weeks or hours to live, how would this change your value system? What transformation would it make in you? If you are a true Christian, an announcement of pending crisis or even death should not measurably affect your life style or value system, for a true Christian knows he has been bought with a price. He belongs to God and his goal is to finish the race God has set before him. Material things are transitory and only spiritual values are permanent. ([Acts 20:13-27 The First Pastors' Conference](#))

**C H Spurgeon** writes that ...

the Apostle regarded life as a race which he had to run. Now, the more quickly a race is run, the better—certainly, length is not the object or desire. The one thought of a runner is how he can most speedily reach the winning post. He spurns the ground beneath him; he cares not for the course he traverses except so far as it is the way over which he must run to reach his desired end. Such was life to Paul—all the energies of his spirit were consecrated to the pursuit of one objective—namely, that he might, everywhere, bear testimony to **the Gospel of the Grace of God**—and the life which he lived here below was only valued by him as a means to that end. He also regarded the Gospel and His ministry in witnessing to it, as a sacred deposit which had been committed to him by the Lord, Himself. He looked upon himself "as put in trust with the Gospel" and he resolved to be faithful though it should cost him his life.

He says he "**desired to fulfill the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus Christ**." Before his mind's eye he saw the Savior taking into His pierced hands the priceless case which contains the celestial jewel of the Grace of God and saying to him—"I have redeemed you with My blood and I have called you by My name—and now I commit this precious thing into your hands, that you may take care of it and guard it with

your heart's blood. I commission you to go everywhere in My place and to make known to every people under Heaven the Gospel of the Grace of God." All Believers occupy a somewhat similar place. We are, none of us, called to the Apostleship—and we may not all have been called to the public preaching of the Word of God—but we are all charged to be valiant for the Truth of God upon the earth and to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Oh, to do this in the spirit of the Apostle of the Gentiles! ([A Gospel Worth Dying For](#))

**Pastor Steven Cole** offers some excellent insights on what it takes to **finish the course**...

**(1) To finish the course**, you must put the ministry that you received from the Lord above even life itself...

To finish the course, you must recognize that God has entrusted a ministry to you. There is no such thing in the Bible as a Christian without a ministry! ( We have fallen into a wrong way of thinking, where some who are super-committed go into "the ministry," but everyone else just putters around at serving the Lord in their spare time as volunteers. It is significant that every time in Scripture that the subject of spiritual gifts is mentioned, it uses the word "each" or "every" (Ro 12:3; 1Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7, 16; 1Pet. 4:10). As Peter puts it, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Every Christian has received a gift from God. Every Christian will give an account to God of his stewardship in using that gift for God's purposes, as Jesus taught in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30).

Thus whether you're a waiter, an accountant, a carpenter, or a housewife, if you're a Christian you must see yourself as being in the ministry, just as I'm in the ministry. I happen to get supported by my ministry and you may not. In that matter, you are more like the apostle Paul than I am! He chose to work in a "secular" job to pay his bills. Ministry is not just a task or sphere of service; it is a mentality or way of thinking that permeates all of life. Seeing yourself in the ministry means that you are available to God 24-7, to use you to help others draw near to God. It may mean serving someone in a practical way by meeting a need. It may mean sharing the gospel with an unbeliever or encouraging a believer by listening to his problems or by sharing relevant Scriptures. You can minister through giving or through prayer. But whatever form it takes, ministry means not focusing on yourself, but on others by being available to God to work through your life. You won't fulfill the ministry that God has given you if you aren't even aware that you are in the ministry! But, you are!...

**(2) To finish the course**, you must recognize that you are a conscript, not a volunteer....

**(3) To finish the course**, you must sign over your life to Jesus Christ, expecting hardship as you follow Him....When James Calvert went out as a missionary to the cannibals of the Fiji Islands, the captain of the ship sought to turn him back. "You will lose your life and the lives of those with you if you go among such savages," he cried. Calvert replied, "We died before we came here." Those faithful missionaries had signed over their lives to Jesus...

We should live each day all-out for the Lord, knowing that if He brings trials into our lives, He will also give us the grace to endure them. But we must live in light of eternity, not for the fleeting pleasures of this life only. The only way to live in light of eternity is to be totally abandoned to Jesus Christ here and now, trusting in Him in every trial...

**(4) To finish the course**, you must keep the finish line in view: faithfulness to the gospel of God's grace....

**(5) To finish the course**, you must feed on and proclaim the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27). ([Finishing the Course Acts 20:22-27](#))

#### [WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS](#)

[By Isaac Watts, Vocal by Kathryn Scott](#)

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God!  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,

Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

His dying crimson, like a robe,  
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;  
Then I am dead to all the globe,  
And all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

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Vance Havner wrote that...

It was said of the great racehorse Man o' War: "Some horses led him at the first turn, some led him at the backstretch, a few led him at the far turn, but no horse ever led him in the homestretch." Some Christians run nobly at the start of the race, some do well halfway, but blessed is the man who makes a good finish. Paul's batting average was good to the end of the season: "I have finished my course" (2 Ti 4:7).

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In the Classic movie **Chariots of Fire**, [Eric Liddell](#), ([short video documentary](#)) who later became a missionary to China, first became famous as a runner declaring "*All I know is that God has made me fast and I feel his pleasure when I run!*" ([This quote is @ ~1:22' in this scene from Chariots of Fire](#)) Paul too was a man of conviction and could surely say a similar statement that about Jesus' calling him to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. ( )

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**Unto Death** - The name of Harriet Newell ([Short bio](#) , [Longer bio](#)) has shone in the annals of modern missionary history. At the early age of eighteen she went with her husband as a missionary to India (1793-1812). It was much harder to go then as a pioneer than it is to go today. They arrived on the heathen coast only to remain a few weeks and then to be sent away. With heavy hearts they put to sea again. The young wife was stricken with fever and died. Thus in one year this Christian woman became missionary, wife, mother, and martyr. She seemed to accomplish nothing. She merely sailed away over the sea with a great love in her heart, to be exiled, to die, and to find a grave among strangers. She taught no heathen woman; she told the story of redemption to no benighted soul. But was that lovely young life wasted? By no means! During all the past century her name has been one of the strongest inspirations to missionary work. The story of her consecration has kindled in many other women's hearts the flames of love, sending them to carry the love of Christ to dark, sinful lands. She being dead yet speaketh. ([Ref](#))

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## DEAD MEN ON FURLOUGH

**Ray Stedman** - Karl Marx wrote that **communists are dead men on furlough**, i.e., they treat themselves as though they are as good as dead (cp Ro 6:2-4, Col 2:12). They have nothing to lose so they are ready for anything (Php 1:21). That characterizes even better what a Christian really is. He is really a dead man on furlough. He wants nothing for himself, but wants only to have God exalted, Christ manifested (2Cor 4:10,11,12, 2:14, 15, 16). We have it stated so clearly here in these words which are carved across the front of our auditorium: "**You are not your own; you are bought with a price**" (1Cor 6:19-20) Paul says, "I do not count my life of any value nor as precious to myself -- I am not my own, but I am bought with a price. And that purchase means that I am available to Another to work through me. My aim, my goal, my joy, my desire in life is not that I should have anything for myself, but for my Lord." What a wonderful statement of just how available he was as an instrument of God's working (cp Acts 9:15-16).

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**ONE THING** - Dr. Torrey M. Johnson, one of the founders of Youth for Christ, said to me, "Son, find that one thing you do that God blesses, and stick with it!" That was wise counsel, and I recommend it to you. Vladimir Lenin was the fanatical architect of the former USSR. A colleague once said of him, "Lenin thinks about nothing but revolution. He talks about nothing but revolution. He eats and drinks revolution. And if he dreams at night, he must dream about revolution." No matter how much we deplore Lenin's fanaticism and all the evil that came from it, we must recognize that his single-minded passion not only helped him accomplish his goals but affected the entire course of history.

What is our ruling **passion**? Is there some cause, some sport, some hobby, some project that fills us with

enthusiasm, focuses our energies, and commands the untiring investment of our time and thought and money? In light of what God says has eternal significance, what value does our **passion** really possess?

The apostle Paul expressed a worthy goal when he wrote, "None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24). To know Jesus Christ, to trust Him, to love Him, and to serve Him--that is a passion with eternal value. --V C G ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**THE LEGEND OF THE PELICAN** - I was surprised to learn that in religious art the pelican has long been a symbol of self-sacrifice. Having observed these strange birds firsthand while fishing along the west coast of Florida, I felt that they were more like lazy freeloaders than self-denying saints. With pitiful stares that masked hearts full of envy, they would sit and lust after every fish I caught. Once in a while they would even try to intercept one before I could reel it in.

Their behavior, however, is not why they symbolize self-sacrifice. The association is made because of their red-tipped beak. According to legend, when a mother pelican cannot find food for her young, she thrusts her beak into her breast and nourishes her little ones with her own blood. The early church saw in this story a beautiful picture of what Christ did for us and what we in turn should do for one another. The apostle Paul reflected this self-giving attitude as he made his farewell speech to the Ephesian believers (Acts 20:24).

Because of our sinful nature, we are characterized more by greed than by self-sacrifice. But that can change. Through faith in Jesus, we are forgiven and our hearts are transformed. Then, as we depend on God's Spirit who lives within us, we will practice the art of self-sacrificing love.— by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.  
—Watts

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**A Homing Instinct** - One day a bird tapped at the window of Mrs. Nansen's home at Christiania. Instantly the window was opened, and the wife of the famous arctic explorer in another moment covered the little messenger with kisses and caresses. The carrier pigeon had been away from the cottage for thirty months, but it had not forgotten the way home. It brought a note from Mr. Nansen saying that all was going well with him and his expedition in the polar regions. The explorer had fastened the message to the carrier pigeon and turned the bird loose. The frail courier darted out into the blizzard air. It flew like an arrow over a thousand miles of frozen waste, then over another thousand of ocean and plains and forests, until one morning it entered the window of the waiting mistress and delivered the message which she had been awaiting so anxiously. The bird makes one think of Paul. We are filled with amazement at his faith, sagacity and endurance. How could a little carrier pigeon accomplish a feat so wonderful? After an absence of thirty months how could it keep on a course so true that it would reach its goal two thousand miles away? Paul after twenty years of toil and struggle had his face set as truly as ever towards the goal that he had set before him from the beginning, the world for Christ. ([Ref](#))

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**David Brainerd** whose candle burned so brightly that God brought him home at the relatively young age of 29 wrote in his diary "Oh, how precious is time; and how guilty it makes me feel when I think I have trifled away and misemployed it or neglected to fill up each part of it with duty to the utmost of my ability and capacity. Oh, that I might not loiter on my heavenly journey!" It's too late to redeem the time that is past, but not the time that is passing!

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**Adrian Rogers** offers some other practical thoughts on redeeming the time:

(1) Learn to live in the eternal now. Today is the only day you have. Redeem the time. (2) Stop saying, "If I had time." You do have time. (3) Stop worrying about tomorrow, and stop waiting for tomorrow. Give God today, and He will take care of tomorrow. (4) Cut yourself loose from the past. Bury your failure in the grave of God's forgetfulness (read Mic 7:18-19, Isaiah 43:25, 44:22), and let Him give you a brand new day. (5) If you have not accepted Christ, now is the time "for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME (kairos = the opportune time!) I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU"; behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME (kairos)," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION" (2Cor 6:2)

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Let us pray like the old Puritan

Turn my heart from vanity, from dissatisfactions, from uncertainties of the present state, to an eternal interest in Christ. Let me remember that life is short and unforeseen, and is only an opportunity for usefulness; **GIVE ME A HOLY AVARICE TO REDEEM THE TIME**, to awake at every call to charity (love) and piety (godliness), so that I may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, reclaim the vicious, forgive the offender, diffuse the Gospel, show neighborly love to all. Let me live a life of self-distrust, dependence on Thyself (Thy Spirit), mortification, crucifixion, prayer." (From Valley of Vision)

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Now take a moment, as you ponder the moments of your life which remain and the poignant words of Robin Mark's song...

When It's All Been Said and Done  
There is just one thing that matters.  
Did I do my best to live for Truth?  
Did I live my life for You?  
When It's All Been Said and Done  
All my treasures will mean nothing.  
Only what I've done for love's reward,  
Will stand the test of time.

[Play "When It's All Been Said and Done"](#)

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**TOUGH OR EASY?** - The Christian life—is it tough or easy? Which is it supposed to be? Does our faith in Jesus Christ cause us difficulty, hardship, suffering, and loss? Or does it pave for us an easy road to heaven?

These aren't easy questions. But if we look at some of the people in the Bible—the ones we admire and respect for their obvious faithfulness to the Lord—we see that they didn't have a life of ease. Paul, for example, faced difficulties that would make most of us wonder where God is: shipwrecks, imprisonments, beatings, and other kinds of abuse (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). It seems he was better off before he started following Jesus.

In his book *Amusing Ourselves To Death*, social critic Neil Postman wrote, "Christianity is a serious and demanding religion. When it is delivered as easy and amusing, it is another kind of religion altogether." He's right. Jesus Himself said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24). That's a clear call for self-denial.

Paul was given a task, and he did it wholeheartedly for God's glory, no matter what the cost (Acts 20:24). Are we willing to do what God has called us to do with the same dedication, whether it is easy or tough? —J D Brannon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I do not ask for easy paths  
Along life's winding roads,  
But for the promised grace and strength  
To carry all its loads.  
—Meadows

**Following Jesus is always right—  
but seldom easy.**

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**Life Compared to the Tour de France** - One of the most grueling of all bicycle races is the Tour De France. A contestant in that event, Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle, describes it in a National Geographic article titled, "An Annual Madness." The race covers about 2000 miles, including some of France's most difficult, mountainous terrain. Eating and drinking is done on the run. And there are extremes of heat and cold. To train for the event, Lassalle rides his bicycle 22,000 miles a year. What kind of prize makes people endure so much hardship and pain! \$10,000? \$100,000? No. It's just a special winner's jersey. What then motivates the contestants? Lassalle sums it up: "Why, to sweep through the Arc de Triomphe on the last day. To be able to say you finished the Tour de France." What a tragedy to see this same motive lead to doping scandals in so many of the top tour riders (cf the Tour 2007 when the yellow jersey leader was actually removed from the race because of suspicious behavior. So beloved, don't bring about a scandal but instead finish well like Paul! Your reward is will far surpass -- in degree and in time -- the satisfaction and transient glory these top athletes receive for finishing a grueling bicycle race in Paris! No you won't sweep through the Arc de Triomphe on the last day, but you will stand at the **Bema Seat or Judgment Seat of Christ** and be appropriately recompensed for what you have done during your earthly race, whether it is good or "bad" [*bad* is **phaulos** which means useless or worthless and does not refer to sin which some

**Edwards** offers these wise words of counsel to all disciples

"It is important to note that in both these metaphors THEY GET HARDER THE FARTHER ONE GOES. The farther one goes into the competition, the harder it is to keep competing wholeheartedly. So it seems to be for the disciple. Yet how much better it is to "burn out" than to "rust out." We must be wise enough to take time out for refreshing and renewal, but then continue to "work the works of Him Who sent us while it is day." Henry Martyn served in India for seven years before dying at the age of thirty-one. During this time, he translated the New Testament into three Indian dialects. Before he died, he wrote: ([2 Timothy- Call to Completion](#))

And when I am dying how glad I shall be,  
That the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee.  
I shall not care in whatever I gave,  
Of labor or money one sinner to save.

I shall not care that the way has been rough,  
That Thy dear feet led the way is enough.  
And when I am dying, how glad I shall be  
That the lamp of my life has been blazed out for Thee.

## THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GRACE OF GOD

**Gospel of the grace of God** - What a beautiful description of the **Gospel** which brings salvation, for this miracle comes about only by **the grace of God** (Eph 2:8, 9, Titus 2:11).

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term as God's message of salvation for lost sinners. **Euaggelion** is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

**Wiersbe** comments that...

The Gospel is called "the Gospel of God" (Mark 1:14) because it comes from God and brings us to God. It is "the Gospel of the kingdom" (Mark 4:23, Mt 9:35, Mt 24:14, Lk 16:16) because faith in the Saviour brings you into His kingdom. It is the "Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark 1:1) because He is the heart of it; without His life, death, and resurrection, there would be no Good News. Paul called it "the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) because there can be no salvation apart from grace (Eph. 2:8-9). There is only one Gospel (Gal. 1:1-9), and it centers in what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross (1 Cor. 15:1-11). ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Related Resource:**

- Our Multifaceted Gospel - It's Many Names

**Gospel** ([2098](#)) (**euaggelion** from **eú** = good + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In secular Greek it originally referred to a reward for good news and later became the good news itself. The word **euaggelion** was commonly used in the first century as our words "good news" today. In ancient secular Greek as alluded to above, **euaggelion** described **good news** of any kind and prior to the writing of the New Testament, had no definite religious connotation in the ancient world until it was taken over by the "Cult of Caesar" which was the state religion and in which the emperor was worshipped as a god.

**Alexander Maclaren** once said "The Gospel is not merely a **message of deliverance**, it is also a rule of conduct (**Ed**: And I would add the supernatural power to carry out that "conduct"). It is not merely **theology**, it is also **ethics**. Like some of the ancient municipal charters, the grant of privileges and proclamation of freedom is also the sovereign code which imposes duties and shapes life.

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term **Gospel as God's glorious message** of salvation for lost otherwise hopeless, helpless sinners. **Euaggelion** is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

1. the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23+, Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+)
2. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ

3. the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+, Ro 15:16+, 2Co 11:7+, 1Th 2:2+, 1Th 2:8,9+, 1Pe 4:17+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
4. the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16+)
5. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, Ro 1:1+),
6. the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)
7. the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+, 1Co 1:9+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+)
8. the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
9. the gospel of your salvation (Eph 1:14+)
10. the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+)
11. the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
12. the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11+)
13. In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it "**my Gospel**" indicating that the special emphasis he gave the gospel in his ministry.
14. **An eternal gospel** - Rev 14:6+ (Some writers such as C I Scofield interpret this as a "different gospel" than the other "gospels" mentioned above but I think such a distinction is incorrect and is poorly substantiated).

For a rewarding study, study the preceding references in context making notation of the truth you observe about the gospel. If you would like a special blessing, take an afternoon to go through all 76 uses of **euaggelion** in context making a list of what you learn about the gospel. The Spirit of God will enlighten your heart and encourage your spirit in a very special way...and you'll want to share the "good news" with someone because of your "discoveries"!

**Euaggelion** - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 10:16; Rom. 11:28; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:6; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 6:15; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:12; Phil. 1:16; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:22; Phil. 4:3; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Phlm. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:6

**Euaggelion** was commonly used in the Greco-Roman culture as "a technical term for "news of victory." The messenger appears, raises his right hand in greeting and calls out with a loud voice: "rejoice ...we are victorious". By his appearance it is known already that he brings good news. His face shines, his spear is decked with laurel, his head is crowned, he swings a branch of palms, joy fills the city, euaggelia are offered, the temples are garlanded, an agon (race) is held, crowns are put on for the sacrifices and the one to whom the message is owed is honored with a wreath...[thus] euaggelion is closely linked with the thought of victory in battle." (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) This is a convicting definition - here a pagan messenger radiantly announces good news of an earthly victory. How much more radiant should we be who are the bearers of the great news of Christ's eternal triumph over sin, Satan, and death!

In contrast to the counterfeit gospel, the human proclamation of the **Gospel** (euaggelion) does not merely herald a new era, but in fact actually brings it about because the euaggelion has within it the inherent power to germinate and generate salvation in those who hear it proclaimed. The **Gospel** is not a stagnant system of ethics but is the Word of Truth which is living, moving, growing, bearing fruit and spreading. The **Gospel** possesses a divine energy that causes it to spread like a mustard seed growing into a tree (Mt 13:31,32). The **Gospel** produces fruit both in the internal transformation of individuals, and also in the external growth of the church. The living **Gospel** is the power that transforms lives. As it does so, the witness of those transformed lives produces fruit, including new converts. So as the **Gospel** produces fruit in individual lives, its influence spreads. If this is true (and it is), then why are so many saints shy about speaking forth the good news of the greatest story ever told?! Christ commands believers to share this Good News with the rest of the world. This Good News is Christ's life-giving message to a dying world

Go into all the world and **preach** (aorist imperative = command to do this now! Don't delay!) the Gospel to all creation." (Mk 16:15)

**A. B. Simpson** is reported to have said that the **Gospel** - Tells rebellious men that God is reconciled, that justice is satisfied, that sin has been atoned for, that the judgment of the guilty may be revoked, the condemnation of the sinner canceled, the curse of the Law blotted out, the gates of hell closed, the portals of heaven opened wide, the power of sin subdued, the guilty conscience healed, the broken heart comforted, the sorrow and misery of the Fall undone.

**Grace** (5485) (**charis**) is derived from **chairo** = to rejoice. English = charity. Beggars need "*charity*" even as sinners need *grace*, for we are all spiritual paupers outside of Christ, but "*God gives where he finds empty hands*"-Augustine (cp Mt 5:3+). **Grace** is a word which defies a simple definition but at its core conveys the sense of favor while the specific nuances of **charis** depend on the **context** in which it is used. Someone has written that the word **grace** is probably the greatest word in the Scriptures, even greater

even than "love," because **grace** is love in action, and therefore includes it. It is hardly too much to say that God has in no word uttered Himself and all that was in His heart more distinctly than in this word grace (charis)!

**Grace** in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. You may want to read that again - In other words the Gospel of grace is that by which we are saved (justified) initially and thereafter are "saved" daily (progressive sanctification). Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32+ where "freely give" is **charizomai** from **charis** = a grace gift!). **Grace** addresses man's sin, while **mercy** addresses man's misery. The **gift of grace** makes men fit for salvation, miraculously making **separated strangers** into God's **beloved sons** (1Th 1:4+, 1Jn 3:1+, 1Jn 3:2+, 1Jn 3:3+).

**Spurgeon** in his sermon on this passage declared...

I shall try to proclaim that word, "**GRACE**," so that those who know its joyful sound shall be glad, and those who despise it shall be cut to the heart! **Grace** is the essence of the **Gospel**! **Grace** is the one hope for this fallen world! **Grace** is the sole comfort of saints looking forward to Heaven!...Let me try to explain in a brief manner how the **Gospel** is the good news of **Grace**. The **Gospel** is an announcement that God is prepared to deal with guilty man on the ground of free favor and pure mercy. There would be no good news in saying that God is just, for, in the first place, that is not even news—we know that God is just. The natural conscience teaches man that. That God will punish sin and reward righteousness is not news at all and, if it were news, yet it would not be good news, for we have all sinned—and upon the ground of justice we must perish. But it is news and news of the best kind, that the Judge of all is prepared to pardon transgression and to justify the ungodly! It is good news to the sinful that the Lord will blot out sin, cover the sinner with righteousness and receive him into His favor—and that not on account of anything he has done, or will do—but out of Sovereign Grace!

Though we are all guilty without exception and all most justly condemned for our sins, yet God is ready to take us from under the curse of His Law and give us all the blessedness of righteous men as an act of pure mercy! Remember how David saw this and spoke of it in the 32nd Psalm—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." This is a message worth dying for, that through the Covenant of Grace, God can be just and yet the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus! That He can be the righteous Judge of men and yet believing men can be freely justified by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus! That God is merciful and gracious—and is ready to bless the most unworthy—is a wonderful piece of news, worth a man's spending a hundred lives to tell! My heart leaps within me as I repeat it in this Hall and tell the penitent, the desponding and the despairing that, **though their sins deserve Hell, yet Grace can give them Heaven and make them fit for it**—and that as a sovereign act of love—altogether independent of their character or what they deserve! Because the Lord has said, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," there is hope for the most hopeless! Since "it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy," (Rom. 9:16), there is an open door of hope for those who otherwise might despair!...

The **Gospel** message is of **Grace** because it is directed to those whose only claim is their need. ([A Gospel Worth Dying For](#))

**John Piper** comments...

notice the immense reality of God's grace. The verse ends, "to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." The power of God's holiness and justice are like a great, violent hurricane, and the grace of God is like the eye of the hurricane where all is peace and calm. Grace is the center of God's reality. Grace, or love, is the essential calm at the center of the vortex of his infinite perfections. Paul had felt himself swept into the terror of that hurricane one day on the Damascus road. And then to his utter amazement he was drawn through it into the peace and beauty of the eye of grace even though he was the "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:12–16). ([A Cause to Live For - Desiring God](#))

**Piper** goes on to summarize Acts 20:24 observing that there are two Effects of This Cause Worth Living For

(1) It Made Paul Indifferent to Earthly Gain - First, it made him utterly indifferent to earthly gain. The verse begins, "I do not count my life of any value nor as precious to myself." In other words he had found a cause to live for that was so profoundly satisfying that it was more valuable than life itself. And of course life is the basis of all sex, all drugs, all prestige, all coolness, all wealth. And so, if the lure of the cause surpasses the lure of

life itself, then it surpasses all the things that this life sustains. Or to put it another way, Paul's Creator had given him a cause to live for that freed him for a kind of reckless abandon toward danger. Life for Paul was not dull. It had all the "edge" and "thrill" and "daring" and "differentness" that any 18 year old girl in Minneapolis could ever dream of bearing.

2. It Gave Paul an Incredible Discipline - The second effect that Paul's cause to live for had on him was to give him an incredible discipline to stay on the assigned trail. The verse says that he valued one thing more than life: "if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus." He pictures himself as an athlete running a race. His coach, trainer, audience, and award is Jesus Christ. One thing matters: finishing the course the way he has been taught. ([A Cause to Live For - Desiring God](#))

**Steven Cole** tells the story of a man who finished his course, **John G. Paton** (see also [Biography Resources](#))...

John G. Paton was born in Scotland in 1824. He was reared in a godly home and came to personal faith in Christ. As a young man, he worked in an inner city mission in Scotland. But the Lord put it upon his heart to go as a missionary to the fierce cannibals of the New Hebrides Islands in the South Pacific. In 1839, the first missionaries to these islands had been clubbed to death, cooked, and eaten within a few minutes of landing. About ten years later, some other missionaries had landed on another of the islands where the natives showed an interest in their teachings, and the Lord gave them about 3,500 converts in a short period of time. They needed help in the work. So in 1857, just 18 years after the first martyrs had shed their blood on the beach of the New Hebrides, Paton strongly sensed God's call on his life to offer himself for missionary service there. He immediately met with strong opposition from many that knew him. They argued that he was leaving a certain ministry that God had obviously blessed for an uncertain future where he might throw his life away among the cannibals. His converts needed him and besides, there were plenty of heathen at home to reach. Why go half way around the world to reach these savages? He was even offered a free house and was told to name his salary, on condition that he would stay at home! But these temptations only served to confirm his calling to go to the South Seas. Among the many who sought to deter him was one old Christian gentleman, whose crowning argument was always, "The Cannibals! You will be eaten by Cannibals!" Finally, Paton replied, "Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms. I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer" (John G. Paton Autobiography [Banner of Truth], p. 56).

Paton lost his wife and infant son within a few months of their arrival. He lived in almost daily danger of his life. But God spared him and he lived to age 83, spending his final years traveling around the world publicizing and raising support for the mission. Late in life he said, "Oh that I had my life to begin again! I would consecrate it anew to Jesus in seeking the conversion of the remaining Cannibals on the New Hebrides" (p. 496). John Paton finished his course because he put the ministry that he received from the Lord Jesus above even life itself. I hope that I have convinced you that you need to do the same thing. ([Finishing the Course Acts 20:22-27](#))

**Brian Bell** summarizes Acts 20:24-26 - Paul saw himself as an **accountant** (I count); a **runner** (I may finish my race); a **steward** (the ministry which I received); a **witness** (to testify); a **herald** (preaching the kingdom); a **watchman** (innocent of blood). (Quoted from Warren Wiersbe "With the Word") What a responsibility it is to be a servant of God! Christian teachers must deliver the whole counsel of God. The positive, the negative, the soothing & the corrective. Paul, by lip and life proclaimed the whole counsel of God. ([Sermon Notes](#))

Acts 20:25 "And now, **behold**, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face: **Kai nun idou** (2SAMM) **ego oida** (1SRAI) **oti ouketi opsesthe** (2PFMI) **to prosopon mou umeis pantes en ois dielthon** (1SAAI) **kerusson** (PAPMSN) **ten basileian**:

NET Acts 20:25 "And now I know that none of you among whom I went around proclaiming the kingdom will see me again.

GNT Acts 20:25 Κα ν ν δο γ ο δα τι ο κ τι ψεσθε τ πρ σωπ ν μου με ς π ντες ν ο ς δι λθον κηρ σσων τ ν βασιλε αν.

NLT Acts 20:25 "And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me

again.

KJV Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

ESV Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again.

ASV Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more.

CSB Acts 20:25 "And now I know that none of you will ever see my face again-- everyone I went about preaching the kingdom to.

NIV Acts 20:25 "Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

NKJ Acts 20:25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.

NRS Acts 20:25 "And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again.

YLT Acts 20:25 'And now, lo, I have known that no more shall ye see my face, -- ye all among whom I did go preaching the reign of God;

- **know:** Ac 20:38 Ro 15:23
- **preaching the Kingdom [and the King!]:** Ac 8:12, 28:31, Mt 4:17,23, Mt 10:7, Mt 13:19,52 Luke 9:60, 16:16
- **See:** Ga 1:22 Col 2:1
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S WORDS OF FAREWELL

**Behold** (2400)(idou) - With a second "and now behold" (Acts 20:22) Paul adds an interjection to arrest the attention of the elders (and us) so that they will "Stop! Listen! Pay careful attention!" He is announcing that they will never again each other again in this earthly life. This would serve to reiterate the importance of what he has just said and also what he is getting ready to say.

**Preaching the kingdom** (cp Acts 28:31+) - The kingdom of God is where the King reigns and the King of course is Jesus. **Is He your King?** In the context of this passage, this phrase is another way to say he had **preached the Gospel of the kingdom** (Acts 8:12+), the **Gospel of the grace of God** (Acts 20:24). Compare Luke's similar wording in Acts 8:12+...

But when they believed Philip **preaching** the good news about **the kingdom** of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

**Comment:** See also Mt 4:23+ "proclaiming **the Gospel of the kingdom**", Lk 16:16+ "the **Gospel of the kingdom** of God is preached"

**Preaching** (2784)(kerusso or kerysso from kerux/keryx = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; kerugma = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Rev 19:16+)

The Imperial Herald would enter a town in behalf of the Emperor, and make a public proclamation of the message which his Sovereign ordered him to give, doing so with such formality, gravity, and authority as to emphasize that the message must be heeded! (Think about this in regard to the Gospel of God instead of the decree of a man! cf 1Th 2:13+). He gave the people exactly what the Emperor bade him give, nothing more, nothing less. He did not dare add to the message or take away from it.

**THOUGHT** - Should this not be the example and pattern every preacher and teacher of the holy gospel of God seeks and strives to emulate, yea, even doing so with fear and trembling! ("not as pleasing men but God, who examines our hearts" see 1Th 2:4+)

**Kingdom** (932) (**basileia** from **basileus** = a king) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion. **Basileia** can also refer to the territory or people over whom a king rules. The fundamental principle of the Kingdom is declared in the words of the Lord spoken in the midst of a company of Pharisees, "the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you," (Luke 17:21) In other words, where the King (Jesus) is, there is the Kingdom. So in preaching the "kingdom", Paul preached Jesus. It has been said that the only **kingdom** that will prevail in this world is the **kingdom** that is not of this world! Amen!

## KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

**Preaching** (the Gospel of) **the Kingdom** (of God) reflects the basic truth that there are two kingdoms on earth - the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan. Paul reviewed with the saints at Colossae what God did when he saved us writing...

Giving thanks to the Father, Who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in **light**. (the Kingdom of light) For He delivered us from the **domain** (exousia = right and might ~ Satan is ruler of the kingdom) **of darkness** (the Kingdom of Satan) and transferred us to the **kingdom of His beloved Son**, in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:12, 13+, Col 1:14+)

But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you **out of darkness** (Kingdom of Satan) into **His marvelous light**; (Kingdom of God) (1 Peter 2:9+)

(Jesus sent Paul to the Gentiles) to open their eyes ("eyes of their heart", their spiritual vision - 2Cor 4:4, 2Cor 4:6+) so that they may turn from (~ repentance) **darkness** ("Kingdom of darkness") to **light** ("Kingdom of light") and from the dominion of Satan (Kingdom of Satan) to God (Kingdom of God), in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18+)

**John MacArthur** alludes to two **kingdoms in conflict** commenting...**Preaching the kingdom** meant proclaiming the Gospel, the good news that sinners in the realm of Satan, death, and destruction ("**the kingdom of darkness**") could enter the realm (**Ed**: "realm" = synonym for "kingdom") of salvation, life, and glory ("**the kingdom of God's Son**"). Paul preached this Gospel thoroughly and clearly, as he indicated in Acts 20:20 and Acts 20:27. ([MacArthur, J: Acts 1-12; Acts 13-28 Moody Press](#)) (Bolding added)

**You...will no longer see my face** - At least not in this earthly life. Now ask yourself, what effect might this statement have on the following words? These are the last words they will ever hear from the great apostle. Surely this adds considerable weight and solemnity to the words that followed. As Phillips says "His attentive listeners redoubled their attention."

**Acts 20:26** "Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men:[dioti marturomai](#) (1SPMI) [humin ente semeron hemera hoti katharos eimi](#) (1SPAI) [apo tou haimatos panton](#)."

NET Acts 20:26 Therefore I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of you all.

GNT Acts 20:26 διτι μαρτυρομαι μιν εν τω μερον μου τι καθαρος εμι πτω αματος πτωων.

NLT Acts 20:26 I declare today that I have been faithful. If anyone suffers eternal death, it's not my fault,

KJV Acts 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

ESV Acts 20:26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all,

ASV Acts 20:26 Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

CSB Acts 20:26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of everyone's blood,

NIV Acts 20:26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

NKJ Acts 20:26 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

NRS Acts 20:26 Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you,

YLT Acts 20:26 wherefore I take you to witness this day, that I am clear from the blood of all,

- **I testify**: Job 16:19 Jn 12:17, 19:35 Ro 10:2 2Co 1:23, 8:3 1Th 2:10-12
- **that I am innocent**: Ac 18:6 2Sa 3:28 Ezek 3:18-21, Ezek 33:2-9 2Co 7:2 1Ti 5:22

- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Therefore (term of conclusion)** - Why? What is Paul concluding? He has just told them this is their last face to face meeting but that he has told them everything they needed to know about the "whole purpose of God." There is nothing else he could say.

**Eadie** adds "since the supervision henceforth devolves solely on you, and since such is the example of vigilance, anxiety, and love I have set before you, "take heed."

**I testify** (3143)(**marturomai** from **martus/martys** = witness) in its original sense meant summon to witness and thus conveys the idea of testifying in affirmation or exhortation. The idea of **marturomai** is to bear witness by making an emphatic affirmation or a serious declaration. In short, Paul uses this particular verb to emphasize the truth of his following claim (cp similar uses of **marturomai** = Gal 5:3, Eph 4:17). **Marturomai** - 5x - Acts 20:26; Acts 26:22; Gal. 5:3; Eph. 4:17; 1 Thess. 2:11

**Innocent** (guiltless, "my conscience is clear" = NJB) (2513)(**katharos**) literally describes that which is free of dirt and thus **clean**. It describes that which is free from admixture or adulteration and thus is **pure**. The use of **katharos** in the New Testament focuses mainly on an inward cleanness (heart, conscience), rather than on an external or ceremonial cleanness (as emphasized in the Old Testament). **Katharos** is used to modify **conscience** (clean, clear - 1Ti 3:9).

**MacArthur**- He had not only taught the church but also evangelized the lost. He had not been unfaithful in any aspect of ministry. (Ibid)

**The NET Bible** comments that "Paul had a clear conscience, since he had faithfully carried out his responsibility of announcing to (the Ephesians) the whole purpose of God. (**I am innocent of the blood of you all**) That is, "that if any of you should be lost, I am not responsible" (an idiom).

**Blood of all men** - Several commentaries feel Paul is alluding to Ezekiel's description of the faithful watchman who warns the wicked...

"Son of man (addressed to Ezekiel), I have appointed you **watchman** to the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from My mouth, warn them from Me. 18 "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die'; and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but **his blood I will require at your hand**. 19 "Yet if you have warned the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered yourself. 20 "Again, when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I place an obstacle before him, he shall die; since you have not warned him, he shall die in his sin, and his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered; but **his blood I will require at your hand**. 21 "However, if you have warned the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; and you have delivered yourself." (Ezekiel 3:18-21<sup>±</sup>, cp Ezek 33:2-9)

**Comment:** God's word to Ezekiel should serve as a sobering reminder of the responsibility all believers have to speak forth the Gospel of the grace of God as His Spirit gives us opportunity and utterance.

**John Phillips** adds that "As far as Ephesus was concerned, he had fully evangelized and warned the city. If people remained in their sins it was no fault of his. His hands were clean, no blood guiltiness rested on his conscience. He called upon his friends, the Ephesian elders, to corroborate this remarkable claim. (The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary)

**Pastor Steven Cole** observes that "Not everyone is called to be a preacher or missionary, as Paul was. But with whatever gifts God has entrusted to us, the bottom line is the same: we must be faithful by our lives and words to the gospel of the grace of God. If our lives and words betray the gospel of God's grace, we are in some sense guilty of the blood of those who were tainted by our failure (Acts 20:26). If our lives and our words bear witness to the gospel of God's grace, we are innocent of the blood of those who came in contact with our witness. ([Finishing the Course Acts 20:22-27](#))

**Acts 20:27** "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God:**ou gar hupesteilamen** (1SAMI) **tou me anageilai** (AAN) **pasan ten boulen tou theou humin.:**

GNT Acts 20:27 ο γ ρ πεστειλ μην το μ ναγγε λαι π σαν τ ν βουλ ν το θεο μ ν.

NLT Acts 20:27 for I didn't shrink from declaring all that God wants you to know.

KJV Acts 20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

ESV Acts 20:27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

ASV Acts 20:27 For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

CSB Acts 20:27 for I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God.

NIV Acts 20:27 For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

NKJ Acts 20:27 "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

NRS Acts 20:27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

YLT Acts 20:27 for I did not keep back from declaring to you all the counsel of God.

**My Amplified Paraphrase:** For I did not shrink back, hold anything back, or hesitate in fear, but faithfully, boldly, fully proclaimed, declared, taught, and unfolded to you the entire counsel, purpose, plan, and will of God—every truth He intended you to know, without omission, distortion, or partiality. I kept nothing hidden, omitted nothing, nothing softened, nothing neglected. I declared to you the full counsel of God, the whole truth as God revealed it.

- **I did not shrink:** Acts 20:20,35, 26:22,23, 2 Co 4:2 Ga 1:7-10, 4:16 1 Th 2:4
- **The whole purpose of God:** Acts 2:23 Ps 32:11 Isa 46:10,11 Jer 23:22 Mt 28:20 Luke 7:30, Jn 15:15 1Co 11:23 Eph 1:11
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S RESPONSIBILITY FULFILLED

**For (gar) I did not shrink (hupostellō) from declaring (anaggello) to you the whole purpose (boule) of God** - Paul continues his farewell message to the Ephesian elders by explaining why he can testify with a clean conscience regarding his ministry among them. He had never shrunk back (hupostellō) from declaring anything they needed, nor had he selectively avoided difficult truths. With pastoral courage and apostolic faithfulness, he had delivered the whole counsel of God—the full breadth of God's saving purpose, redemptive plan, and sanctifying truth. This verse serves as both a defense of his ministry and a pattern for every spiritual leader: to hold nothing back, to proclaim everything God has revealed, and to shepherd the flock with fearless integrity. Acts 20:27 stands as a solemn reminder that true ministry is measured not by popularity or comfort but by the faithful, unreserved declaration of God's truth.

**For (gar)** is a **term of explanation**. Stop and ask what Paul is explaining. He has just said he was **'innocent of the blood of all men.'** How so? He goes on to explain that he had declared the **'whole purpose of God'** which is another way of saying that he had preached the Gospel at Ephesus, fulfilling his responsibility as a watchman. If he had not told them of the Gospel by which a man is saved or if he had adulterated God's clear revelation (e.g., Gal 1:8, 9), he would not have been **innocent**, because he would not have warned them but would have held back (cp meaning of "shrink") the truth that God had revealed to him to give to others (See Jesus' instructions to Ananias regarding the newly born again Paul's responsibility - Acts 9:15, 16, see especially Jesus' direct instructions to Saul/Paul in Acts 22:21 and Acts 26:14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

**I did not shrink** - **David Guzik** comments on Paul's preaching noting first that...

Paul thought of himself as a watchman, there to bring forth the whole counsel of God's word. This doesn't guarantee the people will be saved, but it will guarantee Paul is without guilt before God. He has done his job! Where are those who today declare the whole counsel of God? Paul warned that in the last days, **people would not endure sound doctrine**, but look for teachers who would tell them what they want to hear - teachers who will scratch their itching ears (2Ti. 4:3+).

**Many preachers today simply use a Bible text as a launching pad, and then go on to say what they want - what the people want to hear.** Others throw in Bible quotations to illustrate their points, or to illustrate their stories! But who will simply let the Bible speak for itself and let it declare its own power? Taking Paul's testimony at full strength, we must say that those preachers who deliberately fail to declare . . . the whole counsel of God are guilty of the blood of all men!

**The preacher who preaches what his audience wants to hear, and not the whole counsel of God, hurts**

### both his audience and himself!

We also must demand that we are being taught the whole counsel of God; not just interesting topics, not just what we want to hear, not just the things that will "grab" people, but what God says to all of our lives. (Bolding and color added for effect) ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Shrink** (shunned = KJV, hesitated = NIV, keep back = YLT) ([5288](#)) (**hupostello** from **hupo** = under + **stéllō** = send or draw) means literally to draw under (out of sight) = draw oneself under = cower or shrink back. Avoid. Cease. **Hupostello** was used for drawing back or letting down sails on a ship and so slackening the course, and metaphorically meant to be hesitant in doing something, shrinking back, avoiding, being unwilling to utter the truth of the Gospel because of fear or reprisals or reproach (Acts 20:27). **BDAG** - (1) to draw back or disappear from a position (Peter in Gal 2:12) Secular uses - draw back - the cloud faded away from the cave; that light faded out. (2). to be hesitant in regard to something - shrink back (Heb 10:38), shrink from, avoid, implying fear (Acts 20:27), to be timid about, keep silent about (Acts 20:20). Secular use - Cyrus urges Lysander not to be timid about asking for money. Liddell-Scott - secular uses - "made him furl his sail." To draw back for shelter (shelter oneself behind, to withdraw himself). To cloak a thing through fear - to prevaricate.

**HUPOSTELLO** - 4V - shrink(2), shrinks back(1), withdraw(1). Acts 20:20; Acts 20:27; Gal. 2:12; Heb. 10:38

**Spurgeon** on shrink from declaring the whole purpose of God ....That man does not preach the whole counsel of God who does not **let God's Word speak for itself** in its own pure, simple language... He will not shirk the truth. He will dare to look at it straight in the face himself and then he will bring it up into the pulpit, and there say to it, 'O Word, speak for thyself, and be thou heard alone. Suffer me not, O Lord, to pervert or misinterpret thine own heaven-sent truth.' (Amen!)

**Declaring** (proclaiming = NAB, announcing = NET) ([312](#))(**anaggello/anangelo** from **aná** = up to, again, back {like our English prefix "**re**"= again thus "**re**-port" or "**re**-hearse" = to say again} + **aggéllō** = tell, declare related to **áγγελος** = messenger) means to bring back word and later to announce, to report. To rehearse, to show, to declare or tell of things done. **Anaggello** means to carry back good tidings, to inform, to provide information, with some contexts conveying the implication of considerable detail (see Acts 14:27, 15:4). In the 14 NT uses of **anaggello**, notice that most report or announce something that has to do with God, including His works and/or purposes.

**ANAGGELLO -13V** - Jn. 4:25; Jn. 16:13; Jn. 16:14; Jn. 16:15; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:4; Acts 19:18; Acts 20:20; Acts 20:27; Rom. 15:21; 2 Co. 7:7; 1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Jn. 1:5

**Alfred Plummer** comments that **apaggello** "has merely the notion of proclaiming and making known, (**anaggello**) has the notion of proclaiming again what has been received elsewhere." ([Ibid](#)) As a practical application of this truth is that believers today should emulate Paul in (1) carefully and accurately handling the Word of Truth (cp 2Ti 2:15+) and (2) in announcing or proclaiming that message of Good News to others, taking care not to alter the message. Remember that the first two letters in "Gospel" spell "**Go**" which is what the early church did for they could not stop speaking what they had seen and heard. (Acts 4:20, cp Acts 5:42 and Jn 4:29, the Samaritan woman at the well) The Gospel is not something just to *come* and *hear*; it is something to *go* and *tell*! Paul was faithful to carry out his responsibility to proclaim the Gospel, not backing down in spite of persecution, and thus he was innocent. He was not responsible for whether a person accepted or rejected the Gospel. If they accepted, the blood of Christ would cover and take away their sins. If they rejected, their own blood would be required.

**Whole purpose** - "All the counsel" (KJV), "Whole plan" (HCSB), "whole counsel" (ESV), "entire plan" (NAB), "whole will" (NIV) So what was **the whole purpose of God?** In context this phrase would certainly include the **Gospel of the grace of God**, good news which Paul presented to all men, excluding none, lest he be held guilty of the blood of those to whom he might have refused to preach.

**David Peterson** comments that

The breadth and depth of Paul's teaching about the **whole will of God** can be discerned from an examination of his letter to the Romans, which he had just written and sent ahead of him at this time. (The Acts of the Apostles - Pillar NT Commentary)

**Purpose** (plan) ([1012](#))(**boule**) expresses a decision, a purpose or a plan which in regard to men is the result of inner deliberation. When used of God **boule** indicates His fixed intention. The idea is that God's purpose stands fixed and cannot be altered. Seven of the twelve NT uses of **boule** refer to God's will and God's purpose (Lk 7:30; Acts 2:23; 4:28; 13:36; 20:27; Ep 1:11; He 6:17). As noted when **boule** is used of men it has a weaker force, expressing an intention or plan that, unlike the situation with God, may or may not be achieved.

**BOULE** - 12V - Lk. 7:30; Lk. 23:51; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:28; Acts 5:38; Acts 13:36; Acts 20:27; Acts 27:12; Acts 27:42; 1 Co. 4:5; Eph. 1:11; Heb. 6:17

**J Vernon McGee** was surely an imitator of Paul declaring...

As I write this, I am a retired preacher. I have made many blunders and have failed in many ways. But as I look back on my ministry, I can say truthfully that when I stood in the pulpit, I declared the Word of God as I saw it. I have the deep satisfaction of knowing that if I went back to any pulpit which I have held, I haven't a thing to add to what I have already said. I don't mean I couldn't say it in a better way, but the important thing is that I declared the whole counsel of God. I have always believed that the important issue is to get out the entire Word of God.

**Rob Salvato** divides Paul's sermon into three sections...

Acts 20:18-21 - Paul reminds these leaders about his faithfulness to the Lord and to the church as he ministered for three years in Ephesus

Acts 20:22-27 - Paul tells these leaders his present approach in light of the past and future

Acts 20:28-35 - Paul warns these leaders of the dangers that they and the church would face. [Sermon](#))

Acts 20:28 "**Be on guard** for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood: [prosechete](#) (2PPAM) [heautois kai panti to poimnio, en o humas to pneuma to hagion etheto](#) (3SAMI) [episkopous, poimainein](#) (PAN) [ten ekklesian tou theou, en periepoiesato](#) (3SAMI) [dia tou aimatos tou idiou.](#):

The International Children's - Be careful for yourselves and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit gave you the work of caring for this flock. You must be like shepherds to the church of God. This is the church that God bought with his own death.

Amplified - Take care and be on guard for yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops and guardians, to shepherd (tend and feed and guide) the church of the Lord or of God which He obtained for Himself [buying it and saving it for Himself] with His own blood.

My Amplified Paraphrase - Keep watch continually ([prosechete](#)—pay close attention, be alert, stay on guard) over yourselves **first**—your own hearts, motives, doctrine, and walk—and **then** over all the flock ([poimnion](#)—the whole community of God's people) among whom the Holy Spirit Himself has placed you (appointed, set in position) as overseers ([episkopoi](#)—guardians, spiritual supervisors, protectors), so that you might shepherd ([poimainein](#)—feed, guide, guard, grow, nurture, care for) the church of God, that blood-bought people who belong to Him, which He purchased ([periepoiēsato](#)—acquired at great cost, secured as His treasured possession) with His own blood—the infinitely precious, sacrificial blood of Christ.

Phillips - Now be on your guard for yourselves and for every flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians - you are to be shepherds to the Church of God, which he won at the cost of his own blood.

Wuest - Be constantly maintaining a careful watch over yourselves with a view to guarding yourselves, also do the same with respect to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit appointed you as spiritual overseers, shepherding the Church of God which He bought for himself through the agency of the blood, the blood which is His own unique blood, possessed by Himself alone.

NET Acts 20:28 Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

GNT Acts 20:28 προσχετε αυτος και παντ τ ποιμν , ν μ ς τ πνε μα τ γιον θετο πισκ πους ποιμα νειν τ ν κκλησ αν το θεο , ν περιεποι σατο δι το α ματος το δ ου.

NLT Acts 20:28 "So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock-- his church, purchased with his own blood-- over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders.

KJV Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

ESV Acts 20:28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

ASV Acts 20:28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you

bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.

CSB Acts 20:28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.

NIV Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

NKJ Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

NRS Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

YLT Acts 20:28 'Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit made you overseers, to feed the assembly of God that He acquired through His own blood,

- **Be on guard:** 2Ch 19:6,7 Mk 13:9 Luke 21:34 1Co 9:26,27 Col 4:17 1Ti 4:16 Heb 12:15
- **All the flock:** Ac 20:29 Song 1:7,8 Isa 40:11 63:11 Jer 13:17,20, 31:10 Eze 34:31 Mic 7:14 Luke 12:32 1Pe 5:2,3
- **Among which:** Ac 13:2, 14:23, 1Co 12:8-11,28-31, 1Ti 4:14
- **Overseers:** Php 1:1, 1Ti 3:2, 5:17 Tit 1:7 Heb 13:17 1Pe 2:25
- **To shepherd:** Ps 78:70-72 Pr 10:21 Isa 40:11 Jer 3:15 Eze 34:3 Mic 5:4 7:14 Zec 11:4 Mt 2:6: Jn 21:15-17 1Pe 5:2,3
- **The church:** 1Co 1:2, 10:32, 11:22 15:9 Ga 1:13 1Ti 3:5,15,16
- **Which He purchased:** Ps 74:2 Isa 53:10-12 Eph 1:7,14 Col 1:14 Heb 9:12-14 1Pe 1:18,19, 2:9 Rev 5:9
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### PAUL'S FINAL CHARGE:

**“I’ve done all I can for you. Now it’s up to you.”**

**John MacArthur** summarizes Paul's last words to the Ephesian elders "to maintain five priorities: be right with God, shepherd the flock, guard the flock, study and pray, and be free from self-interest. (See [Acts Commentary](#))

**Paul** first reminds the elders of their **DUTY** (Acts 20:28) and then of their **DANGER** (Acts 20:29ff), for as **William Barclay** rightly reminds us "The infection of the world is never far away. Where truth is, falsehood ever attacks. There was a constant warfare ahead to keep the faith intact and the Church pure."

### BE VIGILANT: BE RIGHT WITH GOD

**Be on guard** (beware, pay or give attention to, attend to, keep a watchful eye on) [4337](#)(**prosecho** from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted and yet the idea of "the mind" was still implied. **Prosecho** was a naval term which meant to moor or tie up a ship. **Prosecho** was also used to mean "to remain on course". Prosecho in Acts - Acts 5:35; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:10; Acts 8:11; Acts 16:14; Acts 20:28.

**THOUGHT** - If you are a church leader responsible for the sheep, I would strongly encourage you to perform a simple inductive study on prosecho -

- Mt 6:1; 7:15; 10:17; 16:6, 11, 12;
- Lk 12:1; 17:3; 20:46; 21:34;
- Acts 5:35; 8:6, 10, 11; 16:14; 20:28;
- 1 Ti 1:4; 3:8; 4:1, 13;
- Titus 1:14;
- Heb 2:1;7:13;
- 2 Peter 1:19

**A T Robertson** notes the literal sense is "hold your mind on yourselves."

Figuratively **prosecho** conveys the idea of holding one's mind before means to take heed, to pay attention, to give heed, be in a state of alert, to watch out for or to be on guard. When used in this manner **prosecho** warns of anger, usually spiritual but occasionally physical! **Prosecho** is not a call simply to notice something, but to be on guard against it because it is so harmful The idea is to turn one's mind or attention to a thing by being on one's guard against it.

In this passage **prosecho** is in the **present imperative** which is a command to the elders at Ephesus (and by application to elders of every church - **You do have elders don't you? If not who is overseeing the sheep? Who will recognize the savage wolves?**), the watchers of the God's flock, to continually be on the look out for **savage wolves** Satan's "servants of righteousness" (2Cor 11:14, 15+), who craftily seek to bring in error besides truth (2Pe 2:1+, Jude 1:4+) and thereby promote soul deceiving and deadening "doctrines" (cp 1Ti 4:1+, Eph 4:14+)

**Be on guard for yourselves** - Read this very slowly and carefully lest you miss what Paul is saying. **What is he saying? Yourself** first, then the **flock**. First, check the shepherd, then the sheep! Is he not saying in essence what Solomon charged in his proverb...

**Watch** over **your** heart with all diligence, **for** (Term of explanation - What is he explaining?) from it flow the springs of life. (Pr 4:23+)

Paul is saying to the leaders that the **first order of business** is to **guard their own heart and mind** (cp (Mark 13:9+; Luke 21:34+), so that they might be better prepared to then guard the flock entrusted to their watchcare. There are temptations which are unique or peculiar to the position of leadership which necessitate constant personal vigilance! This begs the question dear pastor or elder, how is your personal relationship with God? Are you walking in the light? Are there secret sins about which no one knows? How's your prayer life? Are you in the Word daily (and not just for preparation of sermons or lessons, but for personal feeding, Mt 4:4+)?

**Jack Arnold** - The very first exhortation Paul gives these elders is to take heed to, attend to, or guard, their own souls. No elder can be of any good to the church who is not first himself warm and fervent in his spirit for Jesus Christ and the written Word of God. The very first duty of an elder is to live what he preaches, and he should always be an example to the flock. Elders must first be applying the truth they are learning to life. Their authority comes from God, but men respect their authority when they see elders are living the truth. It is only as they are obedient to the truth which they teach that they have any right to say anything to anyone else. An elder without a heart for Christ is a man full of deceit and hypocrisy, for it is impossible for an elder to lead anyone any further in Christ than he himself has come. An elder should never ask anyone to do anything that he himself is not willing to do. Elder, guard against a cold, calculating, hypocritical heart! A survey taken several years ago gave the five primary reasons why a minister fails in the pastorate. They were: 1) pride; 2) sexual immorality; 3) an unhappy wife; 4) a materialistic spirit, and 5) overwork and discouragement. ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**Paul** gave a similar warning to **Archippus**...

And say to Archippus, "**Take heed** (blepo in the aorist imperative - a command issued with a sense of urgency; "Carry this out now and do it effectively!" see [need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to the ministry (diakonia) which you have received in the Lord (cf Acts 20:24 - "the ministry I received" - ministry is received, not achieved!), that you may fulfill (pleroo) it. (Col 4:17+)

**Comment:** Note that just as with the Holy Spirit's selection of the overseers, the ministry Archippus had received was given to him by the Lord. Beloved, how we need to hear and heed this basic Biblical principle lest our "ministry" be in vain, veritable wood, hay and stubble! All ministry must be from Him, to Him and through Him! Ministry begins with God's choosing, not man's volunteering. He Alone is the Head of the Body. Ministry is not a career ladder but a divine assignment. He Alone is the originating and sustaining Vine (Jn 15:5+). Be sure your service in His Name is indeed His service, the ministry He has graciously given you!

**Barnes** comments on attend to yourselves first...

To your own piety (godliness), opinions, and mode of life. This is the first duty of a minister; for without this all his preaching will be vain. Compare Col 4:17; 1Ti 4:14. Ministers are beset with unique dangers and temptations, and against them they should be on their guard. In addition to the temptations which they have in common with other people, they are exposed to those special to their office - arising from **flattery**, and **ambition**, and **despondency**, and **worldly-mindedness**. And just in proportion to the importance of their office is the importance of the injunction of Paul, to take heed to themselves.

**David Guzik** - The godly leader knows that effective leadership flows from a life, not just knowledge. ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Brian Bell** - "Water never rises above its level" - what we are will determine our preaching, and what we do will never rise above what we are! Spiritual health today is no guarantee of spiritual health tomorrow! (**ED:** A popular Puritan preaching subject was "How to Die Well!" Amen!) We need to consciously and consistently sustain the character traits that foster holiness. ([Sermon Notes](#))

**W Arnot's** summary on **Take Heed**...The logic and the theology of the sentence are equally good. The first care of the spiritual

shepherd is for himself, the next for the flock. In some parts they paint garden walls black, that they may absorb more of the sun's heat and so impart more warmth to the fruit trees that lean on them. Those who in any sphere care for souls stand in the position of the garden wall. The more that the teacher absorbs for himself of Christ's love, the more benefit will others obtain from him. It is not the wall which glitters most in the sunshine that does most for the trees that are trained against it: it is the wall which is least seen that takes in most heat for itself: and the wall that has most heat in itself gives out most for the benefit of the trees. So it is not the preacher who flashes out into the greatest flame himself that imparts most benefit to inquirers who sit at his feet. Those who drink in most of the Master's spirit are most useful in the world. Those who first take heed to themselves will be most effective in caring for the spiritual weal of those who look up to them. (Biblical Illustrator)

In a similar warning **Paul** exhorted **Timothy** (who most commentators think was the pastor at Ephesus at the time of writing of the Pastoral Epistles) to...

**Pay close attention** ("Keep a close watch" = ESV) (**present imperative** - command calling for continual attention!) to yourself and to your teaching ("Watch your life and doctrine closely" = NIV); **persevere** ("persist" = ESV, "continue in" = NKJ) (**present imperative**) in these things; for (Term of explanation) as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you. (1Ti 4:16)

**MacArthur** commenting on 2Ti 2:20-21 (+) writes that...In a **house** there were **vessels** for dishonorable uses, such as garbage and other waste. There were also **vessels** for **honorable** uses, such as food and drink. Only clean ones of high quality were fit for honor. Since God uses clean and holy instruments, **vessels of honor**, self-examination and forsaking sin are essential for leaders. Although God does bless His truth in spite of the preacher, He does not bless the unholy leader, no matter what title, position, or office he might hold. (See [Acts Commentary - Page 223](#))

**Richard Baxter** in his excellent treatise, **The Reformed Pastor** exhorts all leaders to...

1. See that the work of saving grace be thoroughly wrought in your own souls. **Take heed to yourselves**, lest you be void of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach....

**Take heed to yourselves**, lest you perish, while you call upon others to take heed of perishing; and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare food for them.... (See link below for lengthy discussion of this point)

**Take heed, therefore, to yourselves** first, that you be that which you persuade your hearers to be, and believe that which you persuade them to believe, and heartily entertain that Savior whom you offer to them. (Mk12:31)...

**Take heed to your own judgments and affections.** Vanity and error will slyly insinuate, and seldom come without fair presences: great distempers and apostasies have usually small beginnings. (2 Cor. 11:14) (See online book below for more discussion of preceding "take heed" points)

2. Content not yourselves with being in a state of grace, but **be also careful** that your graces are kept in vigorous and lively exercise, and that you preach to yourselves the sermons which you study, before you preach them to others....(See online book below for more discussion)

3. **Take heed to yourselves**, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumbling-blocks before the blind, as may be the occasion of their ruin; lest you unsay with your lives, what you say with your tongues; and be the greatest hindrances of the success of your own labors....

Certainly, brethren, we have very great cause to **take heed what we do**, as well as what we say: if we will be the servants of Christ indeed, we must not be tongue servants only, but must serve him with our deeds, and be "doers of the work, that we may be blessed in our deed." (James 1:22,25)....(See online book below for more discussion of preceding "take heed" points)

4. **Take heed to yourselves, lest you live in those sins which you preach against in others, and lest you be guilty of that which daily you condemn.** (Ro 2:1) Will you make it your work to magnify God, and, when you have done, dishonor Him as much as others? Will you proclaim Christ's governing power, and yet condemn it, and rebel yourselves? Will you preach His laws, and willfully break them? If sin be evil, why do you live in it? if it be not, why do you dissuade men from it? If it be dangerous, how dare you venture on it? if it be not, why do you tell men so? If God's threatenings be true, why do you not fear them? if they be false, why do you needlessly trouble men with them, and put them into such frights without a cause? Do you "know the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death;" and yet will you do them? "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, or be drunk, or covetous, art thou such thyself? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law

dishonourest thou God?" (Ro 1:32; Ro 2:17; Ro 2:21-24) What! shall the same tongue speak evil that speakest against evil? Shall those lips censure, and slander, and backbite your neighbor, that cry down these and the like things in others?

**Take heed to yourselves, lest you cry down sin, and yet do not overcome it; lest, while you seek to bring it down in others, you bow to it, and become its slaves yourselves:** 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.' 'To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.' **O brethren! it is easier to chide at sin, than to overcome it.** (Ed comment: "Amen" or "O my!")

5. Lastly, **take heed to yourselves**, that you not lack the qualifications necessary for your work. He must not be himself a babe in knowledge, that will teach men all those mysterious things which must be known for salvation. (See online book below for more discussion) ([The Reformed Pastor, Richard Baxter - Scroll down to point #4](#)) ([Read the Entire Book - here is the Index to The Reformed Pastor](#))

## **BE VIGILANT: SHEPHERD THE FLOCK**

**Be on guard...for all the flock** - Recall this is a command which calls for continual attention. How could they carry out this command? God's *commandments* always include His *enablements*. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to be the indwelling Helper of His sheep. Jesus' human representative, the "overseer" must yield to, be filled by and empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ in order to successfully carry out the supernatural work of being continually **on guard**.

Jehovah's question to Ezekiel is timeless...

**"Should not the shepherds  
feed the flock?"**  
(Ezekiel 34:2)

**All the flock** - Don't miss the word "all." **Barnes** has a good word on "all"...All the flock the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, the old and the young. It is the duty of ministers to seek to promote the welfare of each individual of their charge not to pass by the poor because they are poor, and not to be afraid of the rich because they are rich. A shepherd regards the interest of the tenderest of the fold as much as the strongest; and a faithful minister will seek to advance the interest of all. To do this he should know all his people; should be acquainted, as far as possible, with their unique needs, character, and dangers, and should devote himself to their welfare as his first and main employment (**Ed**: I would add, he should be praying through his church roster for each of his sheep individually -- all of them, even the obstreperous ones!).

**Jesus** said...

**Do not be afraid** (command in [present imperative with a negative](#) calling for continual dependence on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), little **flock**, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom. (Lk 12:32)

**Flock** (4168)(**poimnion** from **poimen** = shepherd) was literally a flock of sheep but in the NT is applied only figuratively to spiritual sheep that make the community of Jesus' disciples, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The OT describes Israel as **God's flock** (Ps. 77:20; 78:52; 80:1; Isa. 40:11; 63:11; Jer. 13:17; 23:2-3; 31:10; Ezek. 34:2ff.; Mic. 2:12; 5:4; 7:14; Zech. 10:3).

The NT pictures the **church** as a **flock** and the Lord Jesus Christ as its **Shepherd** (Luke 12:32, John 10:1ff; Heb 13:20+; 1 Pet. 2:25+; 1Pe 5:2-4).

Therefore, I exhort the **elders** among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, **shepherd** (aorist imperative calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the **flock** of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the **flock**. 4 And when the **Chief Shepherd** (the Lord Jesus Christ) appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, **clothe** (aorist imperative calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. (1Pe 5:1-3+, 1Pe 5:4-5+)

## **CHECKLIST FOR SHEPHERDS...**

- 1) Shepherd the flock
- 2) Exercise oversight
- 3) Not with compulsion
- 4) Voluntarily
- 5) According to the will of God
- 6) Not for sordid gain
- 7) With eagerness
- 8) Not lording it over
- 9) Proving examples to the flock
- 10) Promise of an unfading crown of glory
- 11) Clothed with humility - God opposed to proud, gives grace to humble

The **TDNT** explains that

The term **poimnē** or **poimnion** is used for flocks or herds of sheep or cattle numbering from 20 to over 500. A mixed herd is in view in Mt. 25:32; such herds are common in ancient Palestine. The sheep and goats pasture together but are separated at night because goats are more susceptible to cold. On summer nights several shepherds come together with their flocks and watch over them in open fields. For better protection the flock might be kept in a walled court with the door closed and the shepherds on guard. (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [TDNT - abridged online](#))

## SOVEREIGN SELECTION BY THE SPIRIT

**Holy Spirit has made you overseers** - These men did not apply for the position. They did not receive this title because they were wealthy, well liked by all, successful in business, etc, but because God's Spirit appointed them to the position! What criteria does your church use in to select those God's Spirit has appointed (See Scriptural "definition" of an overseer - 1 Timothy 3:2-7)?

**Jack Arnold** - This verse clearly tells us that it is God the Holy Spirit who makes and appoints an elder to his position. Men only recognize in a man the biblical qualifications' and the spiritual gifts which God has given. In every biblical local church, God is setting aside a few men for the office of elder. The words "among which" indicate that the elders are under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd, Jesus Christ, for they are not tyrants over the church but servants of Christ among the church. What this verse tells us is that elders are not made by self-appointment, vote of a congregation or ordination by a presbytery, but by the Holy Spirit Himself. The God-prepared men will become obvious in a local church in the same way that cream rises to the top in fresh milk. Men merely recognize God's men for the office of elder. Since an elder is ultimately appointed to the office of elder by God, then that elder's final accountability for leading a flock is not to a denomination, a local congregation or even a pastor-teacher, but to God Himself. God will be the final judge of every elder and an elder must fear God and not be overly concerned about what men may threaten to do to him or say about him. It is better to be faithful to God than to compromise the Word of God at any point. God will bless the elder (and the elder board) who seeks to be faithful to the living Christ and the inspired and infallible Word of God. ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**John Phillips** adds that...

Elders are not chosen by popular vote. Only the **Holy Spirit** can equip a man for that work and endow him with the character, compassion, and the compulsion to undertake its arduous and time-consuming tasks. A man does not push himself into the position of an elder. Wealth and social position, business acumen, natural talent, and worldly success do not equip a man for the work of an elder.

Only **the Holy Spirit** can qualify and call a man to that work. Nor is it a work that can be lightly assumed, flippantly discharged, and easily dropped. If anyone thinks so let him read and read again this message of the great apostle until something of the awesomeness of the position and responsibilities of an elder are burned into his soul. It is easier to run a multi-national corporation than it is to shepherd God's "little flock," and a far less responsible work as well. (Ibid)

**Overseers** (bishops) (1985) (**episkopos** from **epi** = over or upon + **skopos** = goal or end one has in view = English "scope" as in microscope or telescope) is literally one who looks over closely or intently, who views carefully. The **episkopos** describes one who

superintends, exercises oversight or watches over others, thus an "overseer" (one looking over another). The Latin equivalent is *super-visor*, someone who "looks over" things, a manager. From *super-visor* comes the English supervisor. **Oden** emphasizes that "**Episkopos** implies vigilance far more than hierarchy." Barclay sums up episkopos noting that it "always implies two things; first, oversight over some area or sphere of work and second, responsibility to some higher power and authority."

These men are appointed to be the guardians of the church and were to care for the sheep not as dictators but as spiritual leaders who provided godly examples (1Pe 5:1,2,3, 4notes). **Click** for additional insights on **episkopos**. **Episkopos** is found five times in the NT - Acts 20:28; Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1Pe 2:25.

**John Trapp** regarding the **episkopos** quipped that...

many are *Aposcopi* rather than *Episcopi*, saith Espensaeus; byseers rather than overseers.

**MacArthur** - Some have suggested that **episkopos** derives its sense from the city administrator, inspector, or financial manager of Greek culture. Its New Testament usage, however, more closely parallels that of the Essene Jews of the Qumran community. The overseers among the Essenes preached, taught, presided, exercised care and authority, and enforced discipline. Those functions more closely mirror that of the New Testament overseer than the more narrow use of the term in Greek culture. What are the responsibilities of the overseer? They are to rule (1Ti 5:17), to preach and teach (1Ti 5:17), to pray for the sick (Js 5:14), to care for the church (see notes 1 Peter 5:1; 5:2), to be examples for others to follow (1Pe 5:1,2-note), to set church policy (Acts 15:22ff.), and to ordain other leaders (1Ti 4:14).

The poem by **George Liddell** describes the character of an episkopos...

Give me a man of God—one man,  
Whose faith is master of his mind,  
And I will right all wrongs  
And bless the name of all mankind.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
Whose tongue is touched with heaven's fire,  
And I will flame the darkest hearts  
With high resolve and clean desire.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
One mighty prophet of the Lord,  
And I will give you peace on earth,  
Bought with a prayer and not a sword.  
Give me a man of God—one man,  
True to the vision that he sees,  
And I will build your broken shrines,  
And bring the nations to their knees

**Shepherd** ("to care for" = ESV, "to feed" = NJB, YLT, "tend and feed and guide" = Amp) [\(4165\)](#)(**poimaino** from **poimen** = shepherd) means to tend flocks like shepherds who carried out oversight, protecting, leading, encouraging, discipling, guarding, guiding and feeding ("feed and lead"). Paul uses this agricultural term metaphorically to exhort church leaders to exercise administrative and protective activity over the assembly of believers "to promote its edification and peace." (Barnes). English dictionaries say that "**to shepherd**" means to guide, direct or guard in the manner of a shepherd. In short, the **shepherd's** role concerning the flock is to...

### **Graze, Guide and Guard**

**Jack Arnold** - This tells us that the primary task of an elder is to be a shepherd to the flock (local church). Whatever else an elder is called upon to do, he is first and foremost a shepherd. In a moment, we will spend more time on the duty of shepherding the flock, but we need to see that an elder has a many-faceted ministry and is called upon to do many different tasks. The elder is to have charge over the flock. "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate (know) those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction (1 Thes. 5:12). The elder is to teach the flock. "An overseer, then, must be . . . able to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2). He is to rule the flock. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor; especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). He is to admonish the flock. "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction (admonition)" (1 Thes. 5:12). He is to labor among the flock. "But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction" (1 Thes. 5:12). He is to lead the flock. "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13:7). He is to oversee (supervise) the flock. "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock; among which the

Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God . . ." (Acts 20:28). He is to watch for the souls of the flock. "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). He is to set an example to the flock. "Shepherd the flock of God among you . . . nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock" (1 Pet. 5:3). He is to protect the flock. "Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict" (Titus 1:9). He is to manage the flock. "He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Tim. 3:4, 5). It becomes obvious that an elder has a big responsibility, and this is why God has ordained that a multiplicity of elders should govern a local church, for no one man has all the gifts and talents to do all these various activities. All of the duties named are to be done because an elder is a shepherd. Shepherding is his first responsibility. A shepherd always is caring for his sheep. Shepherding involves more than teaching. It also involves protecting, guiding, guarding and disciplining the members of the local church. Christians are called sheep for a specific reason, for it makes a great analogy on how and why the elders are called upon to shepherd the flock of the local church. To shepherd sheep is a very difficult task. Sheep must be led to water and to food for they cannot find these things themselves. Sheep must be kept quiet and calm because they frighten easily. The shepherd must pull out any poisonous weeds in the grazing land because the sheep do not know how to distinguish good food from bad food. Sheep have no way of protecting themselves and will let ravishing wolves kill them without putting up a fight. When a sheep goes astray from the flock, the shepherd must break its leg so as to make it stay in the fold. In the spiritual realm, elders must see to it that the church is cared for and every basic need, spiritual, social and material, is met. Furthermore, it is important that shepherds discipline Christians when it is needed, and no man should be an elder unless he is willing to objectively mete out discipline, even to his closest friend in the local church. Notice carefully the words "to shepherd the church of God." Elders are not called upon to shepherd some social club or humanitarian fraternal organization, but the church of God. Christians are God's people and God has ordained that the shepherds (elders) should govern them. This tells us clearly that no Christian is truly biblical unless he is united to a local church with ruling elders to shepherd him. This also tells us that no man should be an elder who is not people oriented, for a shepherd must work with people. The church of God is not buildings and programs per se, but people, God's people, who must be shepherded. ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**Jesus**, the **Good Shepherd** (Jn 10:11, cp Ps 23:1±), the **Great Shepherd** (Heb 13:20, 21+), the **Chief Shepherd** (1Pe 5:4+) gave clear instructions regarding the role of the shepherd of the flock in some of His last words (His words are always important, but "last words" are surely of very special import to His shepherds)...

**Tend** (**bosko** in the **present imperative** = continually feed, pasture, tend to the needs of calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) My lambs...**Shepherd** (**poimaino** in the - continually take care of, guide, look after, pasture) My sheep...**Tend** (**bosko** in the **present imperative** calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) My sheep. (Jn 21:15, 16, 17notes)

**Spurgeon commenting on Jesus as our Shepherd in Ps 23:1:** The Lord is my shepherd. What condescension is this, that the infinite Lord assumes towards His people the office and character of a Shepherd! It should be the subject of grateful admiration that the great God allows Himself to be compared to anything which will set forth His great love and care for His own people. David had himself been a keeper of sheep, and understood both the needs of the sheep and the many cares of a shepherd. He compares himself to a creature weak, defenseless, and foolish, and he takes God to be his Provider, Preserver, Director, and, indeed, his everything (Ed: Pause a moment and praise Jesus as our [All in all](#)). No man has a right to consider himself the Lord's sheep unless his nature has been renewed (2Cor 5:17+) for the scriptural description of unconverted men does not picture them as sheep, but as wolves or goats (cp Mt 25:32, 33). A sheep is an object of property, not a wild animal; its owner sets great store by it (1Co 6:20+, Titus 2:14+, cp Lev 20:26), and frequently it is bought with a great price. It is well to know, as certainly David did, that we belong to the Lord. There is a noble tone of confidence about this sentence. There is no "if" nor "but", nor even "I hope so"; but he says, "The Lord is my shepherd." We must cultivate the spirit of assured dependence upon our heavenly Father. The sweetest word of the whole is that monosyllable, "**My.**" (Ed: "Amen!") He does not say, "The Lord is the shepherd of the world at large, and leads forth the multitude as his flock", but "The Lord is my shepherd;" if He be a Shepherd to no one else, He is a Shepherd to me; He cares for me, watches over me, and preserves me. The words are in the **present tense**. (Ed: In the Septuagint the Greek verb **poimaino** is indeed in the **present tense** signifying Jesus' continual shepherding of me, His too often unruly sheep! Thank You Jesus for Your kindness and faithfulness to forever be My Shepherd! Hallelujah!) Whatever be the believer's position, he is even now under the pastoral care of Jehovah.

At the end of the **letter to the Hebrews** we find a sober warning to **all spiritual leaders** (and a warning to the sheep)...

**Obey** (To the sheep: present imperative = command to make this their habitual practice calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your leaders and **submit** (present imperative calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to them, for they keep watch (ἀγρυπneo) - literally "abstaining from sleep!" ~ figuratively = keeping awake, attentive, watchful) over your **souls** (Note this! Our souls!) as **those who will give** (αποδομι) **an account** (See 2Cor 5:10+; Ro 14:10-12+). Let them do this with joy and not with grief (stenazo), for this would be unprofitable for you. (Heb 13:17+)

**Brian Bell - Shepherd** - Our Lord is called the Good Shepherd who died (Jn.10:11); The Great Shepherd who lives (Heb13:20); The Chief Shepherd who is coming again(1 Pet 5:4). His ministers are rightfully called shepherds, & their people sheep. Howard Hendricks said, "If you can't stand the smell of sheep, you shouldn't be a shepherd." ([Sermon Notes](#))

**Church of God** - A brief technical note - Some manuscripts read "of the Lord" and others read "of the Lord and God." Most translations favor "of God."

**Horton** writes that the **church** was "an assembly made His own at a tremendous price, the precious blood of Jesus. (See Eph 1:7; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 14; 13:12-13.) His blood is the ground of the New Covenant (Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20), and the shedding of His blood put the new covenant into effect and brings believers into right relationship with God (Rom. 5:9; Col. 1:20; Rev. 5:9).(Acts: A Logion Press Commentary)

**Church** ("the assembly" = YLT) ([1577](#))(**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call; gives us our English ecclesiastical) literally means called out and in secular use described those citizens who were called out from their homes to be publicly assembled (e.g., a regularly summoned legislative body or an assembly of the citizens) or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Ekklēsia** was used of a general gathering of people (Acts 19:32, 40). In most of the NT uses **ekklesia** describes a people with a shared belief, an assembly of the Christian community (congregation, church). The **Septuagint** repeatedly used the Greek noun **ekklesia** to translate the Hebrew words describing the congregation or assembly of Israel (Dt 9:10, 18:16, 31:30, Jdg 20:2, 1Sa 17:47, 1Ki 8:14), and this same "OT meaning" is found in Hebrews 2:12 (quoting Ps 22:12) and Acts 7:38.

**BDAG** has this note on the Christian adoption of the word **ekklesia** - (**Ekklesia**) apparently became popular among Christians in Greek-speaking areas for chiefly two reasons: to affirm continuity with Israel through use of a term found in Gk. translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to allay any suspicion, esp. in political circles, that Christians were a disorderly group).

**He purchased with His own blood** - The Greek allows for rendering it either as "with His own blood" (NAS, KJV, ESV, et al) or "with the blood of His own." The NET Bible favors the latter and supplies the word "Son" to clarify by Whose blood it was purchased. New Jerusalem Bible is similar - "with the blood of His own Son." How did God accomplish this end? "He...did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all..." (Ro 8:32+) Note the word "**own**" which in the Greek papyri was used as term of endearment to near relations! The upshot is that the church is God's, not man's! The people belong to God, not the pastor, even though he is responsible for feeding those that are under his care.

"God has not only redeemed His people **from** bondage and death but **for** Himself." (A W Pink)

**Thomas Constable** feels that "A better translation of the last part of this verse would be, "He [God the Father] purchased with the blood of His own [Son]" (cf. Ro 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col. 1:20).

**Jack Andrews** - "**Purchased**" is stated in the past tense—that means it has been paid in full! Salvation is not on the installment plan!...In their rendition of "Nothing but the Blood" the Jason Lovins Band sings these words: You blood speaks a better word than all the empty claims I've heard upon this earth Speaks righteousness for me and stands in my defense—Jesus it's Your blood. What can wash away my sins—what can make me whole again—nothing but the blood—nothing but the blood of Jesus. Your cross testifies in grace tells of the Father's heart to make a way for us—now boldly we approach not earthly confidence—it's only by Your blood. What can wash us pure as snow—welcomed as the friends of God—nothing but Your blood—nothing but Your blood King Jesus! What can wash away our sins—what can make us whole again—nothing but the blood—nothing but the blood of Jesus! The next time you begin to think that you are not worth much—remember Acts 20:28—the Lord God thought enough of you to shed His own blood to purchase your salvation! Paul gives a warning to the elders

**Purchased** ("acquired with" = NAB, "obtained with" = NET, "bought with" = Berkeley; "paid the price for," "gained possession of") ([4046](#)) (**peripoieomai** from **peri** = around + **poiéo** = make) literally means to make around oneself and then or gain anything, making it one's own, by paying a price, by performing labor, etc.

**Friberg** - (1) preserve (for oneself), save (Lk 17.33); (2) gain or acquire (for oneself), obtain (1Ti 3.13); pay the price for, acquire with much effort (Acts 20.28)

**Vincent** = "to make [*poieo*] to remain over and above [*peri*] hence to keep or save for one's self

**Liddell-Scott** - to make to remain over and above, to keep safe, preserve, Hdt., Thuc., etc. 2. of money, to save up, lay by, Xen. 3. to put round or upon, procure, to get things into their own hands, Thuc. II. Med. to keep or save for oneself, Hdt., etc.:to compass, acquire, obtain, Thuc., Xen.:absol. to make gain, Xen.

**Gilbrant** - In known Greek literature, both classical and Biblical, this verb is used only in the middle voice. It refers to purchasing or acquiring which is made to the personal advantage of the purchaser or, in some exceptions, for the advantage of someone else. In some instances, as in Lk 17:33, **peripoieomai** can indicate the preservation of something already owned, even one's own life. The Septuagint uses **peripoieomai** to translate a number of Hebrew words: chāyâh, chāmal, chāsakh, yāthar, pāṣach, qārâ', rākhash, and shāphakh. The various uses of these terms include the saving of someone's life (Ge 12:12) or an entire nation (Isa 31:5). In Isaiah 43:21 **peripoieomai** indicates the possessive love God feels for His own. (See peripoiesis) In the New Testament both occurrences of peripoieomai involve relinquishing something more precious than money before the possession is gained. In Acts 20:28 Christ gives His own blood to purchase the Church, and in 1 Timothy 3:13 the deacons render good service to purchase good standing with God. In both passages a life is given—in surrender, in death, and in service. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Robert Culver** - Some writers take notice of peripoieomai, still another word for purchasing, used once with reference to the atonement, by Paul in his exhortation to the Ephesian elders, saying 'Take heed ... to feed the church of the Lord, which he **purchased** with his own blood' (Acts 20:28 ASV; only one other occurrence, 1 Tim. 3:13). .... 'To make one's own, get for oneself' is the agreed sense. This puts a unique slant on atonement—the price paid by the heavenly bridegroom to obtain a bride—comes to mind.

**McCune** in **peripoieo** in Acts 20:28 - Peripoieo means to acquire, obtain, gain for oneself, or purchase. This seems to emphasize the result of buying—having been acquired. The possession is emphasized. Paul counseled the elders of the church at Ephesus to "shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

Atonement in terms of redemption/ransom means that Christ bought sinners out of the slavery and servitude that sin creates by the payment of an infinite ransom price, the shedding of His own blood. This was not a monetary payment nor is it profitable to ask to whom the payment is made. It is a satisfaction of God's justice that is the point, an important and necessary factor in an ethical basis of atonement.

Here are the other two NT uses of **peripoieomai**

(1) In 1 Ti 3:13 the verb conveys the sense of to acquire

1Ti 3:13 For those who have served well as deacons **obtain** for themselves a high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

(2) In Lk 17:33 the idea is to preserve or make secure for oneself

Luke 17:33+ "Whoever seeks to **keep** his life will lose it, and whoever loses [his life] will preserve it.

Here in Acts 20:28 the meaning is to pay the price for and so to purchase or gain possession of something.

The related noun **peripoiesis** is used in 1Pe 2:9 to describes believers as a "people possessed", the idea being that we have been acquired by purchase (and the price was Jesus' blemish-free blood! - 1Pe 1:18, 19+) with the corresponding idea of preservation of that which is purchased. .

**Peripoieomai** in the **Septuagint** - Gen. 12:12; Gen. 31:18; Gen. 36:6; Exod. 1:16; Exod. 22:18; Num. 22:33; Jos. 6:17; Jos. 9:20; Jdg. 21:11; 1 Sam. 15:3; 1 Sam. 15:9; 1 Sam. 15:15; 1 Sam. 25:39; 2 Sam. 12:3; 1 Ki. 18:5; 1 Chr. 29:3; Job 27:17; Ps. 79:11; Prov. 6:32; Prov. 7:4; Prov. 22:9; Isa. 31:5; Isa. 43:21; Jer. 48:36; Ezek. 13:18; Ezek. 13:19;

#### **Related Resources:**

- New Covenant in the Old Testament;
- Why the New is Better;
- Abrahamic vs Old vs New

**Phillips** - A shepherd guides and guards his sheep, grooming them, going before them, leading them beside still waters and green pastures. He knows each one by name. He fends for them, fights for them, feeds them, gathers them into the fold. The Lord Jesus portrayed Himself as a Shepherd. Paul reminds these elders that they are under-shepherds of "the church of God, which he hath

purchased with his own blood." Purchased at such cost, the Lord's people are of infinite worth, and the work of a shepherd one of awesome responsibility. (Ibid)

### **Eastern Shepherds and Their Flocks**

The work of a shepherd in the East is in many respects different from a shepherd's work among ourselves. The Oriental flock does not graze within fenced pasturages, but moves hither and thither through the wild pasture lands, following the lead of the shepherd, and often going to a great distance from inhabited places. It therefore takes all the shepherd's vigilance to keep his flock together—to prevent one part of it from straying gradually, in search of pasturage, to the north, another to the south, another to the east, and another to the west. In these remote districts, too, attacks from wild beasts are not uncommon; a wolf or a bear will pounce suddenly upon an unsuspecting sheep, and the shepherd must risk his own life, as David did, to rescue the imperiled sheep. The shepherd, or overseer, is responsible to his employer for the safety of the sheep, and he must render a strict account of that which has been lost, or which has perished. Here is an extract from Oriental law on this point, as quoted by Paxton: "Cattle shall be delivered over to the cowherd in the morning; the cowherd shall tend them during the whole day with grass and water; and in the evening shall re-deliver them to the master, in the same manner as they were entrusted to him. If, by the fault of the cowherd, any of the cattle be lost or stolen, that cowherd shall make it good. When a cowherd has led cattle to any distant place to feed, if any die of distemper, in spite of the fact that the cowherd applied the proper remedy, the cowherd shall carry the head, the tail, the forefoot, or some such convincing proof taken from the animal's body, to the owner of the cattle. Having done this, he shall be no further answerable. If he neglects to act thus, he shall make good the loss." Paul, therefore, compares the Ephesian Church to a flock of sheep, seeking pasturage under the guidance of their shepherds, yet prone of themselves to wander, and constantly exposed to peril from wild beasts. The shepherds, he teaches, are answerable not only for the divisions which occur in the flock through their neglect, but also for the attacks of wild beasts, permitted by the same neglect. (S. S. Times.) (Biblical Illustrator)

**F B Meyer** has the following homiletical thoughts on Acts 20:28...

THERE are many lessons in this verse.

(1) The Christian worker must not neglect his own soul. He must take heed to himself, as well as to the flock. Our temptation is to neglect our close walk with God in our eagerness to save others.

(2) The overseer, elder, or bishop, is not set over the flock, but is in it. Note the force of the Greek, as given in R. v.: the flock in the which they are made bishops. So to the end of life the most eminent of God's servants must remember that he is but a saved sinner, needing the blood and righteousness of Christ as much as the weakest of his flock; and he also must lie down in green pastures, and be led beside still waters.

(3) The office of the minister is given by the Holy Ghost. It is He who lays on him the burden of souls, and equips him for his work. He, too, is willing to direct and use. How awful and solemn the responsibility! Woe be to us if we exercise our ministry only for the eye and ear of our fellow-men!

(4) Notice that the Church is distinctly asserted to be God's. "Feed the Church of God." We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. His by choice, by purchase, by the drawing of the Holy Ghost. We must get a right understanding of this doctrine of the Church, that she had been taken out of the world to be God's peculiar possession and delight.

(5) The purchase money of the Church is here said to be God's own blood. It is a remarkable expression. It stands alone in the Word of God, but brings out very distinctly the thought that the entire Godhead achieved man's redemption in the offering of the Cross. We are dear to God, and must give Him the benefit of His great expenditure! (Our Daily Homily)

**John Eadie** - Themselves were the first object of thought. You are sinners in need of the same salvation, and unless you have accepted that salvation yourselves, you are not fitted to save others — your own souls first, the souls of others afterwards. To the doctrine which they taught they were to take heed, lest error should mingle with their instructions. They were to impart the truth pure and simple, not corrupted by the "rudiments of the world" and "traditions of men," or tinged with "philosophy and vain deceit." Nor were they to be less careful of their example, of their own growth in the spiritual life. The apostle has himself stated the melancholy issue which he strove by self-command to avoid — "Lest that by any means, having preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a castaway." He warns Timothy, when placed over this Ephesian church, thus—"Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine." Their life should be in such harmony with their labour as to be a commentary upon it: for example gives power to precept — one reason, among others, why overseers of the flock belong to the flock, and are "men of like passions" with those

whom they teach and govern. As under the former economy the priesthood was of human origin, that those vested with it might "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way," so, under the second dispensation, there is a peculiar propriety in appointing men to the task of interpreting the books of the New Testament. Might not such a trust have been reposed in angels, those high and spotless intelligences who are not involved in the common apostasy of our species, and whose rank would command respect and attention ? Had such glorious beings been commissioned to descend on wings of love from their aerial abodes to our forlorn habitation, the world might indeed have been awed by their visits, and these messengers of grace might have commanded impression over a cowering assemblage ; yet, while they preached with unimpassioned argument and appeal, and, from the stores of their own celestial eloquence, urged reason after reason on man to embrace the Saviour; or while they narrated how they watched the cradle of the infant Jesus, ministered to Him in the wilderness, opened the portals of His grave, and formed the escort of His ascension ; or while they spoke of the evils of sin, and referred to their fellows whose rebellion had cast them out of heaven, and enlarged on that sovereign affection which had selected men as the objects of restoring mercy — while such might have been the themes of angelic address, so interesting in themselves and in the vehicle of their communication, still there would be a repulsion in the visage of these white-robed ambassadors — the radiancy of their countenance would prohibit a free access to them — their words might strike, but not affect, because the eloquence that springs from experience is wanting — the heart of man would feel an utter destitution of that assurance of succour and sympathy which community of nature alone can inspire, and which, arising from a feeling of common misery and common salvation, passes from heart to heart with electrical suddenness and power. Teachers of Christianity propose to others that remedy which they have embraced themselves. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit : then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." There is an appropriate efficacy in the thought that he who invites has himself been welcomed — that he who reasons has been induced by the force of his own arguments — that he who warns has known, but escaped the dangers against which he instructs — that he who encourages has felt the joys he proposes, or the perplexities he attempts to unravel. He believes — therefore he speaks ; his audience hear, and are inclined to believe. What in other teachers is enthusiasm, is in him but sobriety. " Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." \* " Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

**Acts 20:29 "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock:ego oida (1SRAI) hoti eiseleusontai (3PFMI) meta ten aphicin mou lukoi bareis eis humas me pheidomenoi (PMPMPN) tou poimniou.:**

NET Acts 20:29 I know that after I am gone fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

GNT Acts 20:29 γ ο δ α τι ε σε λε σ ο ν τ α ι με τ τ ν φ ι ξ ν μου λ κ ο ι β α ρ ε ς ε ς μ ς μ φ ε ι δ μ ε ν ο ι τ ο π ο ι μ ν ο υ ,

NLT Acts 20:29 I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock.

KJV Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

ESV Acts 20:29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

ASV Acts 20:29 I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock;

CSB Acts 20:29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

NIV Acts 20:29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

NKJ Acts 20:29 "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

NRS Acts 20:29 I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

YLT Acts 20:29 for I have known this, that there shall enter in, after my departing, grievous wolves unto you, not sparing the flock,

- **Wolves:** Zep 3:3 Mt 7:15 10:16 Luke 10:3 Jn 10:12 2Pe 2:1+
- **Not sparing:** Jer 13:20 23:1 Eze 34:2,3 Zec 11:17
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL'S PROPHETIC WARNING FOR THE CHURCH!

**I know** (1492)(eido) means to know beyond a shadow of a doubt. It speaks of fullness of knowledge rather than a progress in

knowledge (as with another Greek verb for "to know" = ginosko). **Eido/oida** is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers is often given by the Holy Spirit. Surely Paul knew because he had been instructed by the Holy Spirit. And thus this warning represents a prophecy that would be fulfilled.

It is interesting to me that these are not popular passages for preaching Sunday sermons! Given that these are Paul's parting words warning of danger on the horizon, one wonders why this is not taught more frequently. I once disciplined a young man who was very mature in the Scriptures and yet when I took him to this passage and other NT passages that speak of false teachers, he said that he was largely ignorant of this genre of NT teaching!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved pastor, teacher, church leader, we must continually imitate Paul by not shrinking back from declaring to the sheep anything that is profitable (Acts 20:20) and representative of the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27 -- of course making sure that we speak the truth in love - Ep 4:15), lest we not be innocent of the blood of all men (Acts 20:26)!

**After my departure** - Notice this is a **time phrase**. **Query it (5W/H'S)**. **Why here? What is the significance? Who is involved?, etc.** There is an old saying that "*When the cat's away, the mice will play!*" Paul was a good shepherd, for a good shepherd makes it his job to know each of his sheep, even by name! He would quickly spot a wolf in sheep's clothing! The **savage wolves** had to bide their time and wait for Paul to leave before they began their devouring of the flock.

**THOUGHT**- Dear shepherd, do you know your sheep? Dear overseer, have you been appointed over a portion of a large flock and if so do you know them? As one of my old medical school professors used to say regarding life and death issues of the body "You can't not know!" How much more should we with a shepherding role heed that exhortation, for the life and death issues involve not the temporal state of the physical body, but the eternal state of the soul!

**Savage wolves** - Paul had referred to the church as a flock of sheep and the elders as shepherds and now extends the metaphorical description to label false teachers as **wolves**. Not just **wolves** (This **term of comparison** refers to a large predatory, crafty, greedy, rapacious, ravenous animal - that truth alone would have been bad enough!) but Paul adds that these **wolves** will be **savage** (Greek = **barus** - violent, fierce, cruel, vicious, ferocious). **Webster** says that **savage** describes those lacking the restraints normal to civilized human beings and implies the absence of inhibitions restraining civilized people, so that these individuals are filled with rage, lust, or other violent passions and demonstrate fury or malignity in looks or actions! **Paul is painting a strong word picture!** The question is - is the church hearing what the Spirit is saying through the apostle Paul? (cp Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 36, 13, 22 = **Seven Times!**)

**Among you** - **Guzik** comments that...It is often easier for pastors to deal with the wolves that come from the outside - obviously false teachings and goofy winds of doctrine. But it is very difficult to deal with those who rise up from among yourselves, because you don't want to believe that they are in fact speaking perverse things and trying to draw away the disciples after themselves. But Paul insisted that such people were real, and that pastors would have to deal with them! ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**A W Pink** comments on the metaphor of **wolves**...What a solemn but suggestive and revealing word is that. The wolf, like the fox, is tricky and treacherous, subtle and sly, hence the words "cunning craftiness" in connection with the purveyors of error who "lie in wait to deceive" of Ephesians 4:14. They scruple not to employ the most dishonorable tactics and resort to tricks which honest men of the world would scorn to use. The wolf is cruel and merciless: so are these deceivers of souls. They prate about love, but they are full of hatred toward those who expose them. They are greedy, having voracious appetites, and false prophets are men of insatiable ambition, hungry for applause, avaricious. Jeremiah 23:32, speaks of their "lightness" or irreverence, and Zephaniah 3:4, also says, "their prophets are light and treacherous." So far from being sober and solemn they are frivolous and frothy: it cannot be otherwise, for the fear of God is not upon them. (From An exposition of the Sermon on the Mount)

**Kenneth Gangel** speaks to the modern church regarding (in many congregations) some much needed preventative maintenance writing that...The church can resist false teaching in direct proportion to its knowledge of and dedication to the Scripture. (**Ed: A Loud Amen!**) (Acts. Holman New Testament Commentary)

**Comment:** The United States government knows that the best way to detect a counterfeit \$20 is to be intimately familiar with the real thing and thus examination of real twenty dollar bills is a major segment in the training of new agents! The analogy with the Church, the infiltration of purveyors of perverse doctrine and the need for focusing on the Word of Truth should be clear! Does your church have serious, in depth Bible studies? I admit my bias, but I am convinced that the Precept upon Precept Inductive Bible studies are hands down the best in the world for training sheep how to discern "counterfeit doctrines." Go to their website at [Precept Ministries International](#). Yes, they are time consuming (4-5 hours of personal study, then 1.5-2 hours discussion once per week). There is a sad misconception that Precept Bible studies are primarily for women. Wrong! These studies are for all saints. Of all the Bible studies I have led or taught, the

Precept studies have borne more fruit than any other study (souls have been born again and I did not even know it -- I gave no "invitation" and am not especially "evangelistic"! God's Spirit used God's Word to save one man in the study of the Revelation. He was attending a liberal church which did not preach the Word, and somehow heard about our study on the other side of the city of Austin! Little, did I or he know that God had providentially brought him to the study of Revelation in order to be saved by grace through faith. Why? Because in His omniscience, God knew that less than 6 months after he began the study, he would have an aggressive recurrence of his previously "cured" malignant melanoma and would be falling asleep. And when he fell asleep, he was indubitably in Christ. I could tell many similar stories of marriages saved, of men going from immaturity to maturity, of men hearing the call to go to foreign lands and teach His Word, etc). Dear pastor, you have no need to fear Precept Bible studies, except those who take them will begin to ask for more solid food! Feel free to email me at the [preceptaustin.org](http://preceptaustin.org) if you have any questions.

**Savage** (916)(**barus** from **baros** = weight, something pressing on one physically or emotionally) literally means heavy but in the NT is used figuratively -- of rules and regulations that are difficult to obey and thus are burdensome or oppressive (Mt 23:4, 1Jn 5:3). of sins likened to a heavy burden (ever felt that weight? I have!!!)(Ps 38:4) and of men who bring false doctrine into the church. These men may look like gentle sheep but they are severe, stern, violent, cruel, unsparing. Be on guard!

**Not sparing** (5339)(**pheidomai**) means to treat leniently, to forbear, to spare, to avoid, to refrain from doing something. To save someone from trouble, loss or discomfort (2Co 1:21, 1Co 7:28, With a negative particle [*me*] here in Acts 20:29 and in Ro 8:32). **Present tense** = These wolves are relentless and continually not sparing of the flock. Paul is saying here that their attacks on the God's Truth and God's sheep know no limits! **Beware!** These wolves are "alive and well" and are ever worming their way into God's flocks. These wolves have always been around God's people masquerading in "religious" garb and gab (cp Jer 23:1, Ezek 34:2-3).

**Peter** issues a prophetic warning similar to Paul's writing that

**false prophets** also arose among the people (referring to Israel in the OT), just as there will also be false teachers **among** (Notice where the teachers are - an inside job!) you, who **will secretly introduce (pareisago** = bring in error alongside the truth! Upshot: Shepherds and sheep had better know the Truth!) destructive (**apoleia** = causing utter ruin, complete loss! KJV = "damnable") heresies ("destructive sects," "destructive opinions," "destructive viewpoints," "disruptive views") , even denying the Master Who bought them (1Cor 6:20, Titus 2:14, Rev 5:9), bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2Peter 2:1+)

**Flock** (4168)(**poimnion** from **poimen** = shepherd) a flock of sheep but here spiritual sheep that make belong to Jesus, citizens not of this earth but of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Acts 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them: **kai ex humon auton anastesontai** (3PFMI) **andres lalountes** (PAPMPN) **diestrammena** (RPPNPA) **tou apospan** (PAN) **tous mathetas opiso auton.:**

NET Acts 20:30 Even from among your own group men will arise, teaching perversions of the truth to draw the disciples away after them.

GNT Acts 20:30 κα ξ μ ν α τ ν ν α σ τ σ ο ν τ α ι ν ὄ ρ ε ς λ α λ ο ν τ ε ς δ ι ε σ τ ρ α μ μ ε ν α τ ο π ο σ π ν τ ο ς μ α θ η τ ς π σ ω α τ ν .

NLT Acts 20:30 Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following.

KJV Acts 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

ESV Acts 20:30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

ASV Acts 20:30 and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

CSB Acts 20:30 And men will rise up from your own number with deviant doctrines to lure the disciples into following them.

NIV Acts 20:30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples

after them.

NKJ Acts 20:30 "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

NRS Acts 20:30 Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them.

YLT Acts 20:30 and of your own selves there shall arise men, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

My Amplified Paraphrase "And from among your own number," Paul warns, "men will arise" (stand up, emerge, step forward as leaders) "speaking perverse things" ([diastrepho](#)—twisted, distorted, crooked, truth-bending words) "in order to draw away" ([apospao](#)—to pull away, tear away forcibly, lead off by persuasion or pressure) "the disciples ([mathetes](#)) after them,"— luring them to follow themselves rather than Christ. Their teaching will not build the flock but fracture it; not exalt Christ but elevate their own influence; not guard sound doctrine but corrupt it for selfish gain.

- **And from among your:** Mt 26:21-25 1Ti 1:19,20 2Ti 2:17,18 4:3,4 2Pe 2:1-3 1Jn 2:19 2Jn 1:7 Jude 1:4-16 Rev 2:6
- **speaking:** Pr 19:1 23:33 Isa 59:3 1Ti 5:13 6:5 2Pe 2:18 Jude 1:15,16
- **Draw away:** Acts 5:36,37 21:38 Mt 23:15 1Co 1:12-15 Ga 6:12,13
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THESE "WOLVES" TWIST THE TRUTH

**From among your own selves** - Do not miss Paul's crystal clear warning - false teaching is often an "*inside*" job. The enemy has his deceiving ambassadors of light situated amongst the flock of genuine sheep. Paul now explains the metaphor of wolves is not their physical danger but the "theological" drift they espouse!

Compare Paul's description in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (note disguise is repeated 3 times! The point is that these guys are "good" at hiding their evil intentions!)..

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, **disguising** themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan **disguises** himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also **disguise** themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

**Jack Arnold** - Even from among the congregation at Ephesus would arise false teachers who would try to get a following and pull people away from the local church by preaching crooked and distracting doctrines. Yet, even more specific, some of the elders of that local church would come up with moral and/or doctrinal deficiency, and they would have to be dealt with by the elders who were sound in the Faith. The most dangerous enemies which the church has had have been nurtured in its own bosom. Men who are ambitious, who lust for power or who love popularity, form parties (sects) within the church which produce cliques, divisions and strife. John Calvin said, "Ambition is the mother of all heresies." In his letters to Timothy, who was the pastor-teacher at Ephesus, the Apostle Paul warned Timothy about certain false teachers and called them by name so there would be no mistake as to whom he was referring. "Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). "You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes" (2 Ti 1:15). ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**Speaking perverse things** - Make no mistake. They mislead by the spoken word, specifically the crooked words they teach. If we know the "straight" Word of God, we can detect the "perverse" words they speak.

**Perverse** ([1294](#))([diastrepho](#) from **dia** = separation, in two, throughout + **strépho** = turn) is a verb (used here as an "adjective") which means literally to twist throughout or to distort. To turn different ways. To twist about. **Diastrepho** was used metaphorically in the NT meaning to pervert or to distort. The idea is to cause one to depart from an accepted standard of oral or spiritual values. Paul uses the **perfect tense** which says their words are permanently distorted. There is no spiritual life giving, soul edifying quality in these words!

**Diastrepho** was used in secular Greek to describe a piece of pottery that a careless craftsman had misshaped or that had somehow become distorted before being fired in the oven.

**TDNT** notes that **diastrepho** - means in Greek "to twist," "to dislocate," "to confuse." In Hellenistic and especially Stoic ethics **diastrophe** (literally used to describe the twisting of a fractured limb - distortion) is a

technical term for the moral corruption of the man. The nature of man, which is originally good and oriented to the good, is "twisted" (diastrephetai) by bad teaching (**Ed**: Read Genesis 3:1-7 which teaches that Satan, the crafty seducer, perverted and twisted God's Word, introducing doubt about the goodness of God and the integrity of His Word which had the effect of drawing Adam and Eve away from the Word of Truth and the God of the Truth!) (Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. [TDNT - abridged online](#))

**Draw away** (645) (**apospao** from **apó** = from + **spáo** = to draw or pull) literally means to draw, pull or drag away from. **Apospao** is used literally to draw out a sword in Mt 26:51. **Apospao** is used figuratively here in Acts 20:30 to describe drawing someone away from ("attracting" them from) a point of view (resulting in alienation). A secular use means "alienate pupils from someone." Another classic writing is translated "so that they might be wrested from their sins." Other figurative uses mean to draw away from a place (Lk 22:41) or from people (Acts 21:1).

Here are some other non-Biblical uses of **apospao** from **Moulton and Milligan** -

"you wrote me not to withdraw the gang (of workmen engaged in the copper mines) from Philoteris before they had finished the work." "Withdraw," with no suggestion of violence, though with breach of contract, is the sense in numerous formal documents - "in a case of adoption...in the indenture of a slave...where in a contract of apprenticeship a father is not to have the power of removing his son from his master until the completion of the period.... where a widow threatens to take away her son from a man in whose charge he had been left....In the marriage contract, P Oxy III. 496(9) (A.D. 127), provision is made that in the event of a separation taking place, the bride shall have the power to "withdraw" a certain female slave, who forms part of her dowry."

**Apospao** - 4x in the NT and 6x in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) (Lev 22:24; Josh 8:6 ["drawn them away"]; Jdg 16:9; Job 41:17 ["cannot **be separated**."]; Isa 28:9; Jer 12:14 ["I am about to **uproot** them"]). Here are the other 3 uses in the New Testament...

Mt 26:51 And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and **drew out** his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear.

Lk 22:41 And He **withdrew from** them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray,

Acts 21:1 When we **had parted from** (apospao - drew ourselves away from) them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara

**Disciples** (3101) (**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf **inductive Bible study**) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers.

## Related Resources

- matheteuo - make disciples
- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2](#)
- [Make Disciples 3](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)
- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

**Ralph Earle** - As followers of Jesus we are to be, first of all, learners. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**What happened to the church at Ephesus?** 2Ti 1:15<sup>±</sup> and Rev 2:4<sup>±</sup> would strongly support that Paul's concerns for the church in Ephesus were justified!

2 Timothy 1:15 You are aware of the fact that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.

Revelation 2:4 'But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

**Pohill** records some historical early fulfillments of Paul's prophetic warnings noting that "By the second century Asia was a virtual seedbed for Christian heresy. Paul's warning was thus timely and essential. It is not by chance that this section both opens and closes with an exhortation to vigilance (Acts 20:28, 31), and Paul's reference to his three-year ministry with the Ephesians was not just a reminder of his warnings but also an appeal to be faithful to the sound teachings he had brought them (cf. Acts 20:20f.) (New American Commentary).

**See Related Resources: Doctrine;** See also study of **Sound** used in phrase "sound doctrine" - cp 1Ti 1:10, 2Ti 4:3+, Titus 1:9+)

**A W Pink** on the phrase **draw away the disciples after them** - In that last clause we have another mark of the false prophets. They are inveterate proselytizers. They continually obtrude themselves upon people's attention. They are ever creeping into houses, "leading captive silly women led away with divers lusts." They are continually coaxing and wheedling folk to come to their meetings. But the true prophet never attempts guile or presses anyone to attend his services. No, he is content to follow his Master's practice: "he that hath ears to hear let him hear," and there he leaves it. When a place receives them not they "go their way" (Luke 10:10) instead of pleading and arguing and seeking to draw disciples "after them." (From An exposition of the Sermon on the Mount).

**Acts 20:31** "Therefore **be on the alert** , remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears: [dio gregoreite](#), (2PPAM) [mnemoneuontes](#) (PAPMPN) [oti trietian nukta kai emeran ouk epausamen](#) (1SAMI) [meta dakruon noutheton](#) (PAPMSN) [hena hekaston](#) .:

NET Acts 20:31 Therefore be alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

GNT Acts 20:31 δι γρηγορετε μνημονεοντες τι τριεταν νκτα και μραν οκ παυσμην μετ δακρων ουθετ ν να καστον.

NLT Acts 20:31 Watch out! Remember the three years I was with you-- my constant watch and care over you night and day, and my many tears for you.

KJV Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

ESV Acts 20:31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

ASV Acts 20:31 Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

CSB Acts 20:31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

NIV Acts 20:31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

NKJ Acts 20:31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

NRS Acts 20:31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears.

YLT Acts 20:31 'Therefore, watch, remembering that three years, night and day, I did not cease with tears warning each one;

- **Be on the alert:** Mt 13:25 Mk 13:34-37 Luke 21:36 2Ti 4:5 Heb 13:17 Rev 16:15
- **For a period:** Ac 19:8,10
- **Admonish:** Eze 3:17-20 Mt 3:7 1Co 4:14 Col 1:28 1Th 5:14
- **night:** Ac 20:7,11 1Th 2:9,10 2Th 3:8
- **With tears:** Ac 20:19
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CONSTANT ALERTNESS

**Therefore (term of conclusion) - What's Paul concluding?** He is reiterating the need of the elders to be alert for **savage wolves** because of the deadly impact their false teaching can have on the souls of God's flock.

**Be on the alert** (calling for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) (1127) (**gregoreuo** from **egeiro** = to arise, arouse) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. Later **gregoreuo** came to be used in the moral sphere to call for one to be **vigilant, on the alert**, and in a **constant state of readiness**. **Gregoreuo** describes a mind which is (spiritually) alert not asleep. **Gregoreuo** means to take heed lest a lapse of attention might result in being overtaken unawares by some destructive force or calamity (i.e., false teaching of savage wolves).

**Gregoreuo** - 22x in the NT -

Matt. 24:42; Matt. 24:43; Matt. 25:13; Matt. 26:38; Matt. 26:40; Matt. 26:41; Mk. 13:34; Mk. 13:35; Mk. 13:37; Mk. 14:34; Mk. 14:37; Mk. 14:38; Lk. 12:37; Acts 20:31; 1 Co. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 16:15

Note all **commands in red** should be like alert flags reminding us of our need to reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#)

1 Corinthians 16:13 **Be on the alert** ([present imperative](#)), **stand firm** ([present imperative](#)) in the faith, **act like men** ([present imperative](#)), **be strong** ([present imperative](#)). (See "[THOUGHT](#)" below).

Colossians 4:2+ **Devote** ([present imperative](#)) yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

1 Thessalonians 5:6+ so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober.

1 Peter 5:8+ **Be of sober spirit** ([aorist imperative](#)), **be on the alert** ([aorist imperative](#)). Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Most of the NT uses of **gregoreuo** refer to the believer's being spiritually awake and alert (How? Filled with Word and Spirit), as opposed to being spiritually indifferent and listless. Secular Greek used **gregoreuo** to describe people carefully crossing a river while stepping on slippery stones. Failure to be alert might result in an unwanted dip in the water!

As with the command to **be on guard** in Acts 20:28, **gregoreuo** is **present imperative** which is a command for continual alertness for savage wolves and calls for reliance on enabling power of [the Holy Spirit to obey](#). These **wolves** are like father, like son. Their "father" is the devil (a liar - Jn 8:44) who continually prowls around seeking victims he might devour (1Pe 5:8+), and his offspring follow suit looking for stray, gullible, shallow taught sheep.

**THOUGHT** - How can we keep this command? [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#) or "How to Keep All 1642 Commandments in the New Testament!"

**Charles Simeon** commenting on 1Peter 5:8 writes that...

**Unwatchfulness**, even in a victorious army, exposes it to defeat: much more must it subject us to the power of our subtle enemy. Peter had experienced its baneful effects. He had been warned of Satan's intention to assault him (Lk 22:31). He had been commanded to **pray** lest he should fall by the temptation (Lk 22:40, cp Mt 26:41+); but he slept when he should have been praying (Lk 22:45, 46). He stands in this respect, like Lot's wife (Lk 17:32, Ge 19:26), a monument to future generations; but vigilance on our part will counteract the designs (see *methodeia*) of Satan. The armed Christian, watching unto prayer, must be victorious (Ep 6:18).. [\(1 Peter 5:8, 9 The Means of Defeating Satan's Malice\)](#)

**Beare** writes that...

Confidence in God must not lead to slackness; the spiritual warfare that they wage demands vigilance.

**Remembering** (present tense = continually recalling to mind) ([3421](#)) (**mnemoneuo** from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means exercising memory, calling something to mind, recollecting, paying attention to something so as to be warned (eg Lk 17:32).

**I did not cease to admonish** - Non-stop warning (Note that the word for "hot" in Greek signifies absolutely not!) Remember Paul's charge to all of us in 1 Cor 11:1+. **Dear leader, are you imitating Paul by continually admonishing your sheep?** Perhaps you think its a different day. Paul lived in the first century when Christian doctrines were just beginning to be established. We don't have that same need today. Have you checked the "spiritual fodder" on the internet lately? If you have, then you know that the need has not "ceased" for leaders to warn the sheep without ceasing.

**Night and day** - Paul likes the phrase "night and day" (7/13 uses in Scripture are by Paul Acts 20:31, 26:7, 1Th 2:9, 3:10, 2Th 3:8, 1Ti 5:5, 2Ti 1:3.) This phrase serves to further amplify/emphasize the fact that Paul "did not cease" giving "prophetic" warnings about the "coming invasion" of false teachers/teaching.

**Cease** ("I did not stop" = NET, "unceasingly" = NAB, "I never stopped")([3973](#))(**pauo**) means to cease (middle voice = oneself) from an activity in which one is engaged. **Pauo** in the active sense means to cause something or someone to cease from some activity or state. To make stop. To stop, restrain, refrain, quit, desist. To come to an end.

**F B Meyer** comments "Remember," he said to the elders of the Ephesian Church, "that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31). Each word is significant! Not content with appealing to them by day, he must needs invade his nights; when worn by emotion, labour, and teaching, his tired body might surely claim repose. Nor was this a spasmodic devotion to be followed by spells of indolence and lethargy. He did not cease this ministry for three long years; but pursued it without relaxation, without interruption, without pause. Nor was this work prosecuted with the persistence of a zealot or the eagerness of a partisan; but with the tears of a soul lover. (Paul A Servant of Jesus Christ)

**Admonish** (warned, cautioned, gently reproved, exhorted)([3560](#))(**noutheteo** from **noús** = mind + **tithemi** = place; see **Nouthesia**) literally means to place in the mind and so to warn or give notice to beforehand especially of danger or evil. The idea is to lay it on the mind or heart of the person, with the stress being on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will, emotions and disposition. The idea is to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. **Noutheteo** describes "putting sense into someone's head", alerting them of the serious consequences of their actions and does not mean being judgmental or critical in a superior manner but instead imparting a caring kind of warning against danger. **Noutheteo** is in the **present tense** which indicates Paul was continually admonishing, warning, cautioning, etc

English dictionaries state that to **admonish** is to indicate duties or obligations to; to express warning or disapproval to especially in a gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner; to give friendly earnest advice or encouragement to; to reprove firmly but not harshly; to advise to do or against doing something; warn; caution.

Writing to the disciples of Jesus at Rome Paul exhorted them...

Now I urge you, brethren, **keep your eye** (skopeo in the present tense = continually keep your attention) on those who cause dissensions (dichostasia = divisions) and hindrances (skandalon = that which entices others to stumble) contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive (exapatao in the present tense = they continually thoroughly beguile and lead astray their victims) the hearts of the unsuspecting. (Ro 16:17-18+)

**Guzik** adds...

Some translate warning "counseling." The ancient Greek verb nouthetountes means, "to impart understanding," "to lay on the mind or the heart." The stress is on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will and disposition. It describes a basic means of education. The work of warning - or helping to impart understanding - was a passion for Paul in ministry (Acts 20:31). **It is also the job of church leaders** (1Th 5:12+) and of the church body in general (Col 3:16), providing that they are able to admonish others (Ro 15:14+). ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Each** ([1538](#)) (**hekastos** from **hékas** = separate) means one of an aggregate in a distributive sense - each, every, each one (see below).

**Each one** (hena hekaston) - This phrase combines **hekastos** (above) and **heis**, which is the Greek noun signifying one. This combination strongly conveys the idea of singling out every single individual. I think Paul means this literally -- he literally warned every single individual about the dangers ahead. Perhaps he is referring to every single elder.

## THE MINISTRY OF WARNING

**F B Myer** used this verse for his devotional in "Our Daily Walk"...

THE MINISTRY of warning should be a recognized part of the work of the Church and of each individual member. The foghorn warns the ship from the deadly rocks; the red light warns the train of imminent danger; in the days of the plague people were warned from infected areas: how much more should we, who know the wrath of God which abides on those who refuse Christ, raise our voice in warning. We should do it

deliberately, earnestly, patiently, and in reliance upon the Spirit of God to make our words, however much they may be resented, the means of arresting the wicked from the error of his ways, and those who are taking their first steps in forbidden paths from pursuing them (Ezek 33:7-9).

How wonderful it is that God does not commission angels to carry His warnings and appeals; instead of this, the work that angels might love to do is entrusted to men. It is at our peril that we neglect our opportunities in this direction. If the signalman is placed at a point where many lines of rail cross or diverge, and he sleeps at his post, or neglects his duty, he may be tried for manslaughter; and if we know of people in the immediate circle of our influence who are in danger of ruining their physical, moral, and spiritual well-being, we are bound to raise a warning voice. If we saw, upon the upper reaches of a river, a boat full of people hastening towards the rapids unheeding the danger, surely we might be guilty of being an accessory in their destruction, if we failed to do something to warn them of their peril.

Accompanying our words of warning, there should be the clear reiteration of the Love of God. He does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live. It is not enough to try and prevent men from taking the wrong path, we must urge and allure them to take the pleasant ways of righteousness and peace. All are included in the love of God. Even sin cannot turn away His love, which is like that described in the parable of the Prodigal Son, or 1Cor 13.

PRAYER - O God, we have left undone many things that we ought to have done. Hands have been reached out for help which we have not given; hearts have turned to us for sympathy which we have not blessed. Forgive us, we pray Thee, and at whatever cost may we follow Christ in His redemptive purpose. AMEN.

**Acts 20:32 "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified: [kai ta nun paratithemai](#) (1SPMI) [humas to theo kai to logo tes charitos autou to dunameno](#) (PPPMSD) [oikodomesai](#) (AAN) [kai dounai](#) (AAN) [ten kleronomian en tois hegiasmenois](#) (RPPMPD) [pasin](#)."**

NET Acts 20:32 And now I entrust you to God and to the message of his grace. This message is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

GNT Acts 20:32 κα τ ν ν παρατ θεμαι μ ς τ θε κα τ λ γ τ ς χ ριτος α το , τ δυναμ ν ο κοδομ σαι κα δο ναι τ ν κληρονομ αν ν το ς γιασμ νοις π σιν.

NLT Acts 20:32 "And now I entrust you to God and the message of his grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance with all those he has set apart for himself.

KJV Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

ESV Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

ASV Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

CSB Acts 20:32 "And now I commit you to God and to the message of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who are sanctified.

NIV Acts 20:32 "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

NKJ Acts 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

NRS Acts 20:32 And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified.

YLT Acts 20:32 and now, I commend you, brethren, to God, and to the word of His grace, that is able to build up, and to give you an inheritance among all those sanctified.

- **I commend:** Ac 14:23,26, 15:40 Ge 50:24 Jer 49:11 Jude 1:24,25
- **and to the Word of His grace:** Ac 20:24 Heb 13:9

- **Build:** Ac 9:31 Jn 15:3 17:17 1Co 3:9,10 Eph 2:20-22 4:12,16 Col 2:7 Jude 1:20
- **And to give:** Ac 26:18 Jer 3:19 Eph 1:18 Col 1:12, 3:24 Heb 9:15 1Pe 1:4,5
- **Who are sanctified:** 1Co 1:2, 6:11, Heb 2:11, 10:14 Jude 1:1
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A CALL TO LOOK TO GOD AND HIS WORD

**And now - Expression of time.** In view of the fact that enemies will arise and the elders must be able to contend for the faith, they need God and His Word to lead them in victory over the forces of darkness.

**I commend you to God** - This parallels the order of Paul's earlier charge to the elders to **first be on guard for yourselves** (Acts 20:28).

**John Gill** -The apostle, in commending them to Him, commends them to His grace, wisdom, and power. To His grace; to supply their need; to fit them for every duty He shall call them to, and for every trial He shall exercise them with. They are also commended to His wisdom, to counsel and direct them in all their ways. Likewise, the saints are commended to the power of God, to keep and preserve them. For it is by that alone they are kept; being weak and liable to daily backslidings. They, therefore, should commit themselves to Him, who is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding joy.

**Comment** ("entrust you to" = NET, NLT) [\(3908\)](#)(**paratithemi** from **para** = beside + **tithemi** = place; see also related noun **paratheke**) literally means to place something beside, to set alongside or set something before someone (Lk 9:16, 10:8, 11:6, 1Cor 10:27). In classical Greek **paratithemi** described anything being deposited with a friend for the purpose of safekeeping. The idea is to **entrust** someone to the care, safekeeping or protection of someone and in the present context clearly speaks of Paul placing the elders in the hands of **God** and the **Word of God** that they in turn might be able to feed the flock of God. This pattern is timeless.

We don't need more motivational conferences, church growth seminars, new methods of ministry, and on and on. We need to return to "the **ancient paths** where the good way is, and walk in it; and (both shepherds and sheep) shall find rest for (their) souls" declares the promise keeping God (Jer 6:16). While it is important to see church members actively engaged in ministry, it is more important to first and foremost make sure they are actively engaged with **God and the Word of His grace**. Men and women who are continually being filled with the Word of Christ (Col 3:16+), can't help but carry out the Work of Christ, in the energy of the Spirit of Christ, all for the Glory of God! In these dark last days in American Christianity, may God be pleased to revive His Church according to His Word of Grace ministered by the Spirit of Grace (Ps 119:25+, Heb 10:29+).

**Mark Dever** writes that we should be...

encouraging churches to become more deliberate about "setting forth the truth plainly." People are transformed and renewed in the likeness of Christ when they look at God as He has revealed Himself in both His written and His incarnate Word. The job of the church, then, is not to show people a reflection of themselves. We are instead biblically obliged to raise their gaze, redirecting their attention from themselves to their Creator. There is no secret to a transforming Christian ministry save the power of God's Word and the life-giving breath of His Spirit (Ezek. 37:1-14). You don't need a catchy new metaphor. You don't need the latest evangelism program. You don't need to change the name of your church. You don't need a pastor with a grand scheme for growth and effectiveness and success as the world would define them. What is needed most today is a commitment to being deliberate about setting forth the truth plainly, because the truth as we gaze on it in Christ is what transforms us, what builds us up and sets us free (John 17:17 ; Acts 20:32 ; John 8:36 ). So a healthy church is a Godward-looking church. We look in dependence on Him for our message, our method, and the transformation of our churches into the image of Christ. ([The Deliberate Church Building Your Ministry on the Gospel](#))

**Paratithemi** was one of the last words spoken by Jesus before His death on the Cross...

And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I **COMMIT** (paratithemi) MY SPIRIT."  
And having said this, He breathed His last. (Lk 23:46)

In secular usage the figurative sense of **paratithemi** was to give someone something in trust and thus to "deposit" it with them. **Paratithemi** conveys the picture of a precious treasure being deposited as a trust into another's hands -- ponder that thought as you think of Paul entrusting these spiritual leaders of the flock to God! These men were precious to him.

Paul understood the importance of **paratithemi** in ministry for the Church at Antioch had **commended** him "to the grace of God for

the work" of planting churches in Asia (Acts 14:26), and he himself had **commended** the elders of those new churches "to the Lord in Whom they had believed." (Acts 14:23). In Thessalonica Paul entered the synagogue and for three Sabbaths was "explaining and **giving evidence** (paratithemi) that the Messiah had to suffer and rise again from the dead." (Acts 17:2-3). In his first letter to Timothy Paul said...

This command I **entrust** (paratithemi) to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight (1Ti 1:18)

Then in Paul's second letter to Timothy he exhorted him...

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these **entrust** (paratithemi) to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2Ti 2:2)

Those entrusted with **the word of His grace** must be faithful, reliable, trustworthy men who would not swerve aside because of fear or favor, nor who would not compromise with the spirit of this perverse and crooked age.

**Alexander Maclaren** offers his literal translation of **paratithemi** in Acts 20:32 as...

"I lay you down beside God." That is beautiful, is it not? Here had Paul been carrying the Ephesian Church on his back for a long time now. He had many cares about them, many forebodings as to their future, knowing very well that after his departure, grievous wolves were going to enter in. He says, "I cannot carry the load any longer; here I lay it down at the Throne, beneath those pure eyes, and that gentle and strong hand." For to commend them to God is in fact a prayer casting the care which Paul could no longer exercise upon Him. And that is the highest expression of, as it is the only soothing for, manly Christian solicitude and affection.

The parting counsels involved in the commendation.

1. "Cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart," as the limpet does to the rock. Cling to Jesus Christ, the revelation of God's grace. And how do we cling to Him? What is the cement of souls? Love and trust; and whoever exercises these in reference to Jesus Christ is built into Him, and belongs to Him, and has a vital unity knitting him with that Lord.

2. Cleave to "the word of His grace." Try to understand its principles better; study your Bibles with more earnestness; believe more fully than you have ever done that in that great Gospel there lies every truth that we need, and guidance in all circumstances. Bring the principles of Christianity into your daily life; walk by the light of them; and live in the radiance of a present God. ([Parting Words](#))

## **THE PRIMACY OF THE WORD OF GOD'S GRACE**

**The Word of His Grace** - The Gospel. In Acts 20:24 Paul had just declared that the Gospel he proclaimed was **the Gospel of the grace of God.**" Notice the effects of the Word of His grace, the Gospel of our salvation -

(1) It has the power to bring men to faith in Christ (Ro 1:16+) ("past tense salvation" = justification),

(2) It has the power to build them up in the faith (cp "grow in respect to salvation" 1Pe 2:2+) ("present tense salvation" = sanctification) and

(3) It has the power to give them an inheritance, one which Peter says is imperishable, will not fade away and is reserved in heaven for us (1Pe 1:4+). ("future tense salvation" = glorification)

Elders must be fed the Word in order to be equipped to feed the Word to the flock they shepherd. Shepherds, are you in the Word daily and even more is that word in you?

**Related Resource:**

- Three Tenses of Salvation

**Dawson Trotman** emphasizes that "*The first and continual need in the spiritual life is for food,*" referring to the Word of God. ([Born to reproduce](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** says the **word of His grace** is...

the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, with all the great truths that cluster round and are evolved from it, is the all-

sufficient source of enlightenment and security for individuals and for Churches. And whosoever will rightly use and faithfully keep that great word, no evil shall befall him, nor shall he ever make shipwreck of the faith. It is 'able to build you up,' says Paul. In God's Gospel, in the truth concerning Jesus Christ the divine Redeemer, in the principles that flow from that Cross and Passion, and that risen life and that ascension to God, there is all that men need, all that they want for life, all that they want for godliness. The basis of their creed, the sufficient guide for their conduct, the formative powers that will shape into beauty and nobleness their characters, all lie in the germ in this message, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.' Whoever keeps that in mind and memory, ruminates upon it till it becomes the nourishment of his soul, meditates on it till the precepts and the promises and the principles that are enwrapped in it unfold themselves before Him, needs none other guide for life, none other solace in sorrow, none other anchor of hope, none other stay in trial and in death. 'I commend you to God and the word of His grace,' which is a storehouse full of all that we need for life and for godliness. Whoever has it is like a landowner who has a quarry on his estate, from which at will he can dig stones to build his house. If you truly possess and faithfully adhere to this Gospel, you have enough.

**Ebenezer Temple** says it is called **the word of His grace** because...

- (1) It originates in His grace.
- (2) It records His grace.
- (3) It is the instrument of His grace.

The word of God's grace is given to instruct the ignorant—reclaim the wanderer—comfort the mourner—arouse the careless—confirm the wavering—and edify the Christian. The words here:—

1. Imply the commencement of a work. When we speak of building up, it naturally supposes a foundation is laid and a work begun. This is the case with every true Christian. In the work of conviction, the rubbish is taken away, all views of obtaining salvation by human merit are renounced. Christ is cordially embraced as all our salvation.

2. Insure its continuance. Christians are built up in—

- (1) Knowledge.
- (2) Faith (Jude 1:20).
- (3) Love.
- (4) Holiness.

III. The sublimity of their destinies. Notice here:—

1. The state of happiness expressed. "An inheritance."

- (1) It is a rich inheritance.
- (2) It is a purchased inheritance—bought by the precious blood of Christ.
- (3) It is reserved. Ready prepared for every believer.
- (4) It is eternal.

2. The individuals who shall possess it. "Them which are sanctified."

3. The mode of its conveyance. "To give you." It is the free gift of God's grace.

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that...

God's Word is a tool for **building**. "'Is not my word like fire,' declares the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?'" (Jer 23:29). Sometimes God's Word has to break down before it can build up. Sometimes God's Word has to burn before it can warm. But God's Word is like a hammer—it is a tool for breaking down the old life and building up the new life. It enables us to build the church...(Acts 20:32). If you want to build your life, you must use tools, and the greatest tool of all is the Word of God. The better you understand the meaning of key Bible words, the more tools you will have in your "spiritual workshop" for building your own Christian life and helping to build the church. ([Key Words of the Christian Life](#))

**Mark Dever** adds that...

The New Testament witness to the **primacy of God's Word** in His method is just as conspicuous: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). **The Word sustains us**: "In the beginning was the Word, and . . . in Him was life....And the Word became flesh, and dwelt

among us" (John 1:1, 4, 14). **Jesus, the Word made flesh, is ultimate life incarnate:** "The word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing" (Acts 19:20; cf. Acts 6:7; 12:20-23, 24). **The Word grows and fights:** "And now I commend you to...the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). **The Word is what builds us up and preserves us:** "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Ro 1:16; cf. 1Cor 1:18). **The Gospel, God's clearest expression of His Word, is His effective power for salvation:** "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). **God's Word is that which creates faith:** "[W]hen you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe" (1Th 2:13+). **The Word performs God's work in believers:** "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12+). **God's Word convicts:** "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth" (James 1:18+). **God's Word gives us new birth.** James advises a little later, "in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21+). **The Word saves us. Peter also claims regenerating power for God's Word:** "[F]or you have been born again not of seed which is perishable, but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. . . . And this is the word which was preached to you" (1Pe 1:23, 25+).

**Grace** (favor) (5485)(**charis**) in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32+ where "freely give" is **charizomai [word study]** from **charis** = a grace gift!). **Grace** addresses man's sin, while **mercy** addresses man's misery.

**Which - What is "which?" "To what does it refer in context?"** God's Word, especially the Gospel.

But beware that the intake of God's word is a means to an end (i.e., Christlikeness) and not an end in itself. A church can be saturated with God's word and still be sterile as far as spiritually reproducing itself. The primary purpose of God's Word is to radically alter our way of life!

## THE WORD HAS POWER

This section could be read the word which continually has supernatural power. The Bible alone has the power, the dynamic, the "dynamite" about it which is able to build strong disciples who can then make more disciples (2 Ti 2:2).

**Jack Arnold** rightly says that "Elders must direct their own lives by the Bible; they must direct the local church by the Bible; and they must direct the lives of other Christians by the Bible, not on personal opinion, whim or logic. Only the Bible can build the saints and cause them to understand the inheritance they have in Christ with all the saints who are set apart to God. Paul wanted the elders to understand what he and all the prophets of old understood about the power of the Word. Jeremiah writes "'Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" (Jer. 23:29). ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**Is able** (present tense = continually able) (1410)(**dunamai**) conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. So what is Paul saying about the Word of His Grace? What is he saying about the Gospel? Clearly he believes that the Gospel has supernatural power, miracle working power and that this power is an intrinsic, inherent component of the word of God's grace! Is this not an incredible truth beloved! The Gospel is be capable of breaking a stone cold, hard heart, strong enough to break the power of an ensnaring addictive sin, supernaturally enough to cause spiritual growth.

**Dunamai** is in the **present tense** which signifies **the Word of His grace** is continuously able or continually has inherent power to save us. In other words not only can it save us the first time (justification) but it can supernaturally "save" us every day (sanctification). Beloved, this begs the question - Are you daily going to the "well of living water" the life giving, powerful Word of Truth? If not you are vulnerable to the wiles of the world, the flesh and the devil. If you are substituting devotionals for the pure Word of Grace then you are making a serious mistake. Devotionals are fine but they should never be used in lieu of God's Word for only His Word of grace is able to build you up!

Luke has a similar statement about the power of the Word of God's grace writing that...

**No** (ou = absolutely **no**) **word** (rhema) from God shall be void of power (**adunateo** - essentially the converse of **dunamai**). (Luke 1:37ASV)

**Comment:** This verse says not one single Word of God is powerless or unable to accomplish what God

intends. Modern translations do not convey the sense of the power of the Word quite as clearly as the **ASV** - e.g., the **NAS** = "*For nothing will be impossible with God.*" The **Amplified Version** is somewhat better "*For with God nothing is ever impossible and no word from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment.*"

**James** uses **dunamai** in his description of the **word**...

Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the **word** implanted, which **is able** (dunamai also in in the **present tense**) to save your souls. (James 1:21+)

#### **Related Resource:**

- Simple Inductive Study on the Power of God's Word

**G. Swinnoek** writes regarding the Gospel, the Word of God's grace...

#### **I. To purify your affections.**

It is the usual pipe through which grace may be conveyed into the vessels of your hearts. The laws of men may reform your actions, but it is the gospel of God which can renew your affections. Some poets speak of musicians that by the force of their music can make stones leap into walls, and tame beasts, be they never so savage. The word of God's grace will do much more—it will change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh; it will tame lions, and turn them into lambs (Isaiah 11:4-6).

#### **II. To be the rule of your conduct.**

1. It contains not only promises for your consolation, but also precepts for your conversations; therefore it is called a royal law (James 2:8). A law, because it is to be the canon of our lives. A royal law, because given us by God, sovereign and dominion over all, and therefore power to command what He pleases. The gospel is a law of liberty, but not a law of licentiousness (James 1:25). It frees us from the curse, but not from the commands, of the law. Look therefore to this royal law; expound it in your lives.

2. Let it be your rule for faith. The gospel is the only creed; he that believeth this is a true believer. As the Word—Christ—is the personal foundation, so the word of Christ is the doctrinal foundation for every Christian to build on (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

3. Make it your rule for worship. To serve God according to your own inventions, or men's prescriptions, is rebellion. As the moth eats out the garment, and the rust the iron, so doth an apocryphal worship in time eat out an evangelical worship (Matthew 15:7). All worship of God, without warrant, is like private coining money, high treason against the King of heaven (1 Kings 12:33). Till man can be his own maker, he may not be his own lawgiver (Isaiah 8:20).

4. In all things live by the gospel, and look to the gospel; let that be a light to your feet, and a lantern to your paths; keep the Word, and it will keep you, in an hour of temptation, from Binning, and in an hour of dissolution from sinking. The lawyer, in his doubts, consults with his Lyttleton or Coke; the physician prescribes by Galen or Hippocrates; the philosopher takes advice of his Aristotle; but the godly man must always take counsel of the gospel (Pr 4:26, 27).

#### **III. To be your buckler against opposition.**

The gospel is a magazine, out of which Christians may be furnished with spiritual weapons in their holy war against the kingdom of darkness.

1. It is a shield against evil principles (Mt 22:29).

2. It is a shield against evil practices (Ps 119:9).

3. Doth Satan assault you? (Eph 6:17) Use the gospel for your defense.

4. Is the world to you a place of thorns and briars? (2 Corinthians 10:4.) Get your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and ye may walk comfortably through it.

#### **IV. To be your cordial in all afflictions**

Seneca, going about to comfort his friend Polybius, persuades him to bear his affliction patiently, because he was Caesar's favorite. The word of grace affords you infinitely richer cordials, exceeding rich and precious promises, wherein ye are admitted to be the friends of God, the members of Christ, the temples of the Spirit,

and the heirs of heaven.

## THE WORD OF HIS GRACE PRODUCES HOLY "EDIFICES"

**To build you up** (edify) (3618)(**oikodomeo** from **oikos** = dwelling + **doma** = building [of a house] from **demo** = to build) means literally to build, construct or erect a dwelling. **Oikodomeo** is used here as a metaphor meaning to build up, establish, confirm, edify.

As an aside all the NT uses of **oikodomeo** (and its derivatives) are metaphorical - for example as in this verse it means to "build up" in the sense of encouraging or strengthening one's faith is indicated (Acts 20:32; cp Col. 2: 7; Jude 1:20). In 1Co. 3:10f it means to means to "build upon," in the sense of developing and furthering one's Gospel ministry and in Eph 2:20 specifically speaks of the church "built on" the foundation of Christ and the apostles. The derivative **sunokodomeo** signifies to "build together" in its only use in Eph. 2:22 where in the passive voice (action comes from without, i.e., by the Spirit) it indicates the continuing spiritual process of believers "being built together" into the community of God's people worldwide, joined together by the Spirit of God in Christ.

Webster says that **edify** is derived from the Latin *aedificare* to instruct or improve spiritually, in turn from Latin, to erect a house, in turn from *aedes* temple, house. What a picture of the power of Spirit saturated believers on their brethren.

### Related Resource:

- Alexander Maclaren's sermon Edification.

**Guzik** comments that "Programs can't do it; the spirit of the age can't do it; slick marketing can't do it; entertainment can't do it; only God and the Word of His grace ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

Other passages related to **edification** -

Ro 14:19 Ro 15:2 1Cor. 8:1 1Cor. 14:4-5 1Cor. 14:12 1Cor. 14:17 2Cor. 10:8 2Cor. 13:10 Eph. 4:12 Eph. 4:16  
Eph. 4:29 Col. 2:7 1Th 5:11 Jude 1:20.

In 1 Peter 2:2+ Peter makes it clear that failure to personally partake of **pure milk of the Word** will **impede our spiritual growth. No Word, No growth.** No lie! Simply put one will not be built up or edified. Are you in the Word daily (cf Mt 4:4) and enabled by the Spirit obeying the Word you ingest? What begins to happen to your physical strength if you do not eat for a number of days? Beloved, while we cannot as clearly see the spiritual decrement as easily as the physical decline, you can be assured that spiritually you are become weak. One week without the Word will make one very weak! Look out because the big cats in Africa are always on the lookout for those animals that are weak and straggle behind the herd! (cf 1 Pe 5:8-9+).

**John Gill** writes that Christians may be said to be built up or **edified** when "additions are made to their grace or they grow in the exercise of it; when their spiritual strength increases, when their understandings are more enlightened, their judgments better informed, and their memories filled with divine truths and Gospel doctrines; when they are more and more confirmed in the faith of Christ, both as a grace, and as a doctrine; and their wills are brought to a greater resignation to the will of God, as well as their afflictions are set upon things in heaven, and their souls are more seeking after them (cf. Col 3:1, Col 3:2): and now this is what God is able to do, and does do; for except He builds, in vain do the builders build; He causes all grace to abound; and so does His Word, His essential Word; He is the author and finisher of faith (Heb 12:2), and gives both grace and glory (Ps 84:11)."

**To give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified** - What is able to give us the inheritance, to allow us to possess our possessions so to speak? The God of the Word and the Word of His grace, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is that simple. Why do we run hither and yon to this conference or that seminar and yet fail to run to the the Truth of God and His Word of grace? Our **inheritance** is an unmerited gift, a clear manifestation of God's grace. Outside of Christ in Adam we deserve hell, but when we are set apart (sanctified) in Christ, God gives us heaven!

**Ray Stedman** notes that in this section Paul states that there are four way to perform ministry...

(1) The first is by admonishing with tears, i.e., by "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), as he writes later to the Ephesians. I heard the other day of a certain church which had dismissed their pastor and gotten a new one. Someone asked why they had gotten rid of the old one. A spokesman said, "Because he kept telling the people they were going to hell." The questioner asked, "What does the new man say?" "Oh, he keeps telling them they're going to hell, too." "Well, what is the difference?" he was asked. He said, "The difference is that when the first one said it, he sounded as if he were glad of it. But when the second one says it, he lets you know that is breaking his heart." That is the difference the apostle is talking about -- admonishing with tears, not with harshness, not with judgment, but with concern and care and love, speaking the truth in love.

(2) The second way is to use the Word. "I commend you to the Word," he said. "You have all it takes in that. It is able to do what it was sent to do. It is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance provided for you, the inheritance of the saints in Jesus Christ -- all that Christ is, made available to you. The Word is able to lead you to that; now use it!" he says to these elders. It is able to build men up and to supply them with all that they lack.

(3) And thirdly, "Be selfless in your ministry," he says. "Do not be looking for something for yourself, do not be seeking glory for yourself, or favor, or position, or eminence or prominence or material reward. Look at me," he says. "I have labored among you and these hands have made tents to earn my necessities."

(4) Finally, "Remember that the Lord Jesus has said, 'It is better to give than to receive.' So labor hard in order that you may be able to give and thus to receive the better reward." ([Last Words](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** comments on the "building up" power of the **word of His grace**...

As for the individual, so for the Church, that written word is the guarantee for its purity and immortality. Christianity is the only religion that has ever passed through periods of decadence and purified itself again. They used to say that Thames water was the best to put on shipboard because, after it became putrid, it cleared itself and became sweet again. I do not know anything about whether that is true or not, but I know that it is true about Christianity. Over and over again it has rotted, and over and over again it has cleared itself, and it has always been by the one process. Men have gone back to the word and laid hold again of it in its simple omnipotence, and so a decadent Christianity has sprung up again into purity and power. The word of God, the principles of the revelation contained in Christ and recorded for ever in this New Testament, are the guarantee of the Church's immortality and of the Church's purity. This man and that man may fall away, provinces may be lost from the empire for a while, standards of rebellion and heresy may be lifted, but 'the foundation of God standeth sure,' and whoever will hark back again and dig down through the rubbish of human buildings to the living Rock will build secure and dwell at peace. If all our churches were pulverised to-morrow, and every formal creed of Christendom were torn in pieces, and all the institutions of the Church were annihilated-if there was a New Testament left they would all be built up again.

**Inheritance** ([2817](#)) (**kleronomia** from **kleros** = lot + **némo** = give or distribute) is literally that which is distributed by lot and so refers to a portion which one receives by lot in a general distribution and then, in a more general sense means to possess oneself of, to receive as one's own, to obtain. In other words it can refer to a property already received as well as one that is expected. Although **kleronomia** is an inheritance which one receives by lot, in the NT the idea of chance associated with the lot is not found.

**Kleronomia** refers to inheritance as a human legacy (cf. Mt 21:38; Mk 12: 7, 13; Lk 20:14; Acts 7: 5), to the inheritance of the land of Canaan as promised to Abraham (Heb. 11: 8). **Kleronomia** refers to the inheritance related to our salvation, an inheritance that is the lot of all who have been sanctified by God's grace and are true servants of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 20:32; Col. 3:24), an inheritance that believers receive not through the law, but by grace (a promise - Gal. 3:18), an eternal inheritance made certain by the work of Christ our Mediatorial High Priest under the New Covenant (Heb 9:15), an inheritance which is imperishable, etc (1Pe 1:4), an inheritance guaranteed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:14, Eph 1:18), an inheritance that will not be the lot of the idolatrous or immoral (Eph 5: 5).

**Related Resource:**

- [Dictionary discussion of Inheritance](#)

**Joe Wall** writes that "A primary contribution to the believer's preparation for receiving eternal inheritances, Paul told the Ephesian elders, was the **"word of His grace, which is able to build you up"**, a reference, apparently, to the wonderful grace teaching of the Inherit the kingdom of God. ([Going for the Gold - Joe L Wall](#))

**POSITIONAL SANCTIFICATION =  
PAST TENSE SALVATION =  
JUSTIFICATION**

**Sanctified** ([37](#)) (**hagiazō** from **hagios** = holy, set apart) means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of **koinos**, which means profane or common. The primary meaning of sanctify is "to set apart, to consecrate," but it also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the consecrated.

For clarification, keep in mind that in the NT **hagiazō** has 3 distinct shades of meaning:

- (1) Describing the action of dedicating or consecrating something or someone to the service of God (Mt 23:19,

1Ti 4:5, Acts 26:18, 1Co 7:14, Heb 9:13), **(2)** to treat as holy, as is commanded regarding our Father's Name ("Hallowed" = *hagiozo* - Mt 6:9+) and His Son's Lordship (1Pe 3:15+), and **(3)** to cause someone to have the quality of holiness, as Paul prays for the saints at Thessalonica (1Th 5:23+) and John's prayer for the holy to still be holy (Rev 22:11+).

**Sanctify** is in the **perfect tense** which speaks something occurring in the past but have permanent effects. This tense indicates not only that sanctification is a state of being that is a result of salvation, but in the **passive voice** signifies that it is something that God does for the believer at the time of conversion. In other words God sets the believer apart from darkness to light, from the kingdom of the devil to the kingdom of God, ultimately setting him or her apart for Himself, to be eternally be His treasured possession! Amazing grace indeed! This is called by some "positional sanctification." This one act of sanctification is made possible through the Cross of Jesus Christ.

To put it another way, in Acts 20:32, Paul is describing **past tense salvation (justification)**, at which time the Spirit set the elders apart from the world and unto God. They were "common" or "profane" when they were unregenerate sinners still **in Adam**. But when the supernatural power of the Gospel brought about their new birth, they were transferred to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (**in Christ**), and what had been profane or common, was miraculously made "holy." God took **sinners** and made them into **saints**. Yes, saved sinners still can sin but that is not the **general direction** of their life. Once **justified** (a once for all time transaction), saints begin the life long journey of **progressive sanctification** (present tense salvation) by the same Spirit that set them apart at the time of justification (1Pe 1:2+, 2Th 2:13, Acts 26:18 = "have been sanctified by faith in Me [Jesus]" = justification by grace through faith, which is also described in Heb 10:10+ = Have been sanctified").

See similar uses of **hagiozo** (and related word - **hagiasmos**) referring to **past tense salvation** (justification = "positional sanctification") - Ro 15:16+; 1Cor 1:2; 1:30 [*hagiasmos*]; 1Cor 6:11; 7:14; Eph. 5:26+; 1Th 5:23+; 2Th. 2:13 [*hagiasmos*]; 1Ti 4:5; 2Ti 2:21+)

As **Lewis S. Chafer** says...

**Positional sanctification** is as perfect as He is perfect. It is as complete for the weakest saint as it is for the strongest. It depends only on one's union with and position in Christ. All believers, not only some, are classified as 'the saints.'

**Wuest** writes that **hagiozo** does not mean - merely "to set apart," but in the case of the pagan word, "to set apart for the gods," and in the case of the Christian word "to set apart for God." The worshipper of the pagan god acquired the character of that pagan god and the religious ceremonies connected with its worship. The Greek temple at Corinth housed a large number of harlots who were connected with the worship of the Greek god. Thus, the *set-apartness* of the Greek worshipper was in character licentious, totally depraved, and sinful! The believer in the Lord Jesus is set apart for God by the Holy Spirit, out of the First Adam with the latter's sin and condemnation, into the Last Adam with the latter's righteousness and life (cf 1Cor 15:22,45). Thus, the worshipper of the God of the Bible partakes of the character of the God for Whom he is set apart. This is **positional sanctification**, (**Ed**: justification) an act of God performed at the moment a sinner puts his faith in the Lord Jesus (1Cor 1:2). The work of the **Holy Spirit** in the yielded saint, in which He sets the believer apart for God in his experience, by eliminating sin from his life and producing His fruit (cf Gal 5:22+; Gal 5:23+), a process which goes on constantly throughout the believer's life, is called **progressive sanctification** (1Thes 5:23+).

#### **Related Resources:**

- Three Tenses of Salvation
- [The Power of God's Word](#)
- [The Word of God - Quotations and Illustrations](#)
- [Inductive Bible Study: Application](#)
- [Meditation - An Application of Inductive Bible Study](#)
- [Primer on Biblical Meditation](#)
- [Memorizing His Word](#)
- [Expository Notes on 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:17](#)
- [Expository Notes on 1 Peter 2:1; 1 Peter 2:2](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Hungering for God's Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Desiring the Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [1 Peter 2:1-3 Cultivating a Hunger for God's Word - John MacArthur](#)
- [The Sufficiency of Scripture - John MacArthur](#)
- [Life Hid and Not Hid by Alexander Maclaren](#)
- [The Necessity of Scripture - William D. Barrick](#)

- [The Bible "A Lamp Unto My Feet by Greg Herrick](#)
- [Rationality, Meaningfulness & Precision of Scripture - Robert L. Thomas](#)
- [The Authority of Scripture - excellent article by Richard L. Mayhue](#)
- [The Word-Filled Life - Developing the Mind of Christ by Hampton Keathley III](#)
- [Psalm 1 Delighting in the Law of God - John Piper](#)
- [Psalm 1 Meditate on the Word of the Lord Day and Night - John Piper](#)
- [Psalm 1 Delighting In The Word - Scott Grant](#)
- [Psalm 1:2 - Notes on this Passage - C H Spurgeon](#)
- [Psalm 1:1,2 Separated and Saturated - Warren Wiersbe](#)
- [The Authority & Power of the Word upon the Heart - J C Philpot](#)
- [The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures - A W Pink](#)
- [Profiting From the Word - A W Pink](#)
- [Benefits Arising From the Word of God - Charles Simeon's Sermon on Micah 2:7](#)

Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes:[arguriou e chrusiou e himatismou oudenos epethumesa:](#)  
(1SAAI )

NET Acts 20:33 I have desired no one's silver or gold or clothing.

GNT Acts 20:33 ργυρ ου χρυσο ου ματισμο ο δεν ς πεθ μησα·

NLT Acts 20:33 "I have never coveted anyone's silver or gold or fine clothes.

KJV Acts 20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

ESV Acts 20:33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

ASV Acts 20:33 I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

CSB Acts 20:33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

NIV Acts 20:33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

NKJ Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.

NRS Acts 20:33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing.

YLT Acts 20:33 'The silver or gold or garments of no one did I covet;

- Nu 16:15 1 Sa 12:3-5 1Co 9:12,15,18 2Co 7:2 11:9 12:14,17 1 Pe 5:2
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FREEDOM FROM SELF INTEREST

Paul is alluding to another danger for spiritual leaders, the possibility that they might misuse their position for personal gain, focusing on self not others, focused on getting instead of giving! He addresses it head on by giving them his example to imitate, for he imitated Jesus' attitude towards money and possessions (1Cor 11:1<sup>+</sup>). Paul's attitude toward silver, gold or possessions was in stark contrast to the investment some Ephesians had formerly made in their books on magic (Acts 19:19). His attitude also contrasted with that of the purveyors of artifacts associated with the cult of Artemis (Acts 19:24-27).

**I have coveted no one's silver** - Paul did not desire earthly wealth. He had not lived among the Ephesians in order to obtain their property (cp similar disclaimer in 2Cor 12:14). Paul had set his mind on the things above and not those on the earth (Col 3:2). It is worth noting that Paul could have demanded support from the saints at Ephesus (read 1Cor 9:13-14), but he refused to do so (1Cor 9:12).

**Much trouble is caused by our yearnings  
getting ahead of our earnings!**

**I have coveted** (1937)(**epithumeo** from **epí** = upon, used intensively + **thumós** = passion) (See also noun **epithumia**) means literally to fix the desire upon (object could be good [Mt 13:17, Lk 22:15 used of Jesus] or bad [1Co 10:6]). **Epithumeo** means to have a strong desire to do or secure something. Note that the preposition **epi** can express motion toward or upon and thus one

lexicon defines it as to set one's heart upon. In sum, **epithumeo** describes a strong impulse toward something so that one's passions or affections are directed toward some object, thing or person.

Paul's had written similar words to the saints at Thessalonica emphasizing that he had never been interested in financial gain in the ministry...

For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a **pretext** (purpose or motive alleged or an appearance assumed in order to cloak the real intention or state of affairs; pretext suggests subterfuge and the offering of false reasons or motives in excuse or explanation, e.g., a pretext to get out of work) for greed—God is witness (1Th 2:5+)

**Guzik** - Paul concludes by trying to communicate his heart, his motive in ministry. He wasn't in it for himself, but for God's glory and for the building up of God's people. ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

Puritan writer **Thomas Watson** said...

A man may be said to be given to covetousness when he takes more pains for getting **earth** than for getting **heaven**. (Ed: Contrast Paul's command to Spirit filled saints - Col 3:2+, Col 3:3+!)...Covetousness is not only in getting riches unjustly, but in loving them inordinately, which is a key that opens the door to all sin....There is no better antidote against coveting that which is another's than being content with that which is our own.

**Matthew Henry** reminds us that...

Covetousness is commonly a master-sin and has the command of other lusts.... Covetousness is spiritual idolatry; it is the giving of that love and regard to worldly wealth which are due to God only....He is much happier that is always content, though he has ever so little, than he that is always coveting, though he has ever so much...Poor people are as much in danger from an inordinate desire towards the wealth of the world as rich people from an inordinate delight in it.

**Barnes** comments on the mention of clothes (raiment), noting that...

Changes of raiment among the ancients, as at present among the Orientals, constituted an important part of their property. (Barnes notes on Mt 6:19 [my note] have the following comment) Treasures, or wealth, among the ancients, consisted in clothes or changes of raiment, as well as in gold, silver, gems, wine, lands, and oil. It meant an abundance of anything that was held to be conducive to the ornament or comfort of life. As the Orientals delighted much in display, in splendid equipage, and costly garments, their treasures, in fact, consisted much in beautiful and richly-ornamented articles of apparel. See Ge 45:22, where Joseph gave to his brethren changes of raiment; Jos 7:21, where Achan coveted and secreted a goodly Babylonish garment. Compare also Jdg 14:12.

**Seeking empties a life;  
giving fills it.**

**Steven Cole** notes that...

Greed is always easy to recognize in others: They won't share what they have with me! But it's not so easy to spot it in ourselves. Charles Simeon, in a sermon on Luke 12:15 ([Caution Against Covetousness](#)), developed three criteria to judge whether we are under the influence of greed. He said that we should examine the manner in which we seek material things; the degree to which we enjoy them; and, the manner in which we mourn or are anxious when we lose them. Givers are blessed because they are freed from this sin that brings both temporal and eternal destruction.

**Acts 20:34** "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my own needs and to the men who were with me:[autoi ginoskete](#) (2PPAI) [oti tais chreiais mou kai tois ousin](#) (PAPMPD) [met' hemou huperetesan](#) (3PAAI) [ai cheires autai.](#)

NET Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine provided for my needs and the needs of those who were with me.

GNT Acts 20:34 α το γιν σκετε τι τα ς χρε αις μου κα το ς ο σιν μετ μο πηρ τησαν α χε ρε ς α ται.

NLT Acts 20:34 You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who were with me.

KJV Acts 20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

ESV Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me.

ASV Acts 20:34 Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

CSB Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my needs and for those who were with me.

NIV Acts 20:34 You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

NKJ Acts 20:34 "Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

NRS Acts 20:34 You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions.

YLT Acts 20:34 and ye yourselves know that to my necessities, and to those who were with me, minister did these hands;

- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**You yourselves** - The pronoun **you** serves to intensify Paul's following claim. The elders had personal, intimate knowledge of the truth of what he was saying. As **A T Robertson** says "Certainly they knew that the church in Ephesus had not supported Paul while there."

**Know** (1097) (**ginosko**) describes knowledge gained by experience or by an active relationship between the one who knows (the elders) and the person known (Paul). The elders could testify from experience that Paul provided for his needs (he was a tentmaker).

**These hands** (Acts 18:3 1Co 4:12 1Th 2:9 2Th 3:8,9) - **NET Bible** adds "these hands of mine" where the phrase "of mine" not in Greek but added to make clear that Paul is referring to his own hands, a reference to his toil as a tent maker at Thessalonica and Corinth. The point is that Paul did not consider himself too "good" to perform mundane tasks involved in manual labor.

**Furneaux** imagines that Paul must have held out his hands for the elders to see to emphasize his point, adding "As he held them up, they saw a tongue of truth in every seam that marked them." ([Acts 20:28-38 Commentary](#)).

**Ministered** (5256) (**hupereteo** from **huperetes** = an attendant or assistant <> from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower = an "under rower" ~ a subordinate who waits to carry out a superior's commands) means to serve as a rower (see **huperetes** below), to do service on board the ship and then came mean simply to serve, render service or assistance or be helpful to someone.

In secular Greek usage the **huperetes** (Mt 5:25, 26:58; Mk 14:54, 65; Jn 7:32, 45, 46; 18:3, 12, 18, 22; 19:6; Acts 5:22, 26) referred to common sailors (distinguished from **nautes** = seaman) who were down in the ship's, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "Row, Row, Row!"

The verb **hupereteo** occurs 3 times in the NT and below are the other two uses...

Acts 13:36 "For David, after he **had served** the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay;

Acts 20:23 Then he gave orders to the centurion for him to be kept in custody and yet have some freedom, and not to prevent any of his friends from **ministering** to him.

**Barnes** has a pithy comment...

How much more influence will such a man have than he who has been worldly-minded; he who has sought to become rich; and he, the only memorial of whose life is, that he has sought "the fleece, not the flock"—that he has gained the property, not the souls of men.

**Needs** (5532) (**chreia** from **chraomai** = to use, make use of or **chreos** = a debt) means a necessity, what is needed or the occasion of need. Clearly Paul's tent making business brought in a good income, a testimony to the ability of his (our) God to supply for our

needs. See Paul's encouragement to the saints at Philippi (Php 4:19+) - See **Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide**.

**And to the men who were with me** - To whom does this refer? Some commentaries surmise Aquila and Priscilla.

**MacArthur** makes the point that...

Although Paul had every right to receive support for his ministry (1Cor 9:3ff.) and sometimes did (2Cor. 11:8-9; Phil. 4:10-19), it was his custom to support himself (2 Cor. 11:7; 12:13; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8). He did so that he might "offer the gospel without charge" (1Cor 9:18).

**Acts 20:35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'": [panta](#) hupedeica (1SAAI) [umin oti outos kopiontas](#) (PAPMPA) [dei](#) (3SPAI) [antilambanesthai](#) (PMN) [ton asthenounton](#), (PAPMPG) [mnemoneuein](#) (PAN) [te ton logon tou kuriou lesou oti autos eipen](#), (3SAAI) [Makarion estin](#) (3SPAI) [mallon didonai](#) (PAN) [e lambanein](#). (PAN) :**

NET Acts 20:35 By all these things, I have shown you that by working in this way we must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

GNT Acts 20:35 π ν τ α π δειξα μ ν τ ι ο τ ω ς κοπι ν τ α ς δε ν π λ α μ β ν ε σ θ α ι τ ν σ θ ε ν ο ν τ ω ν , μ ν η μ ο ν ε ε ι ν τ ε τ ν λ γ ω ν τ ο κ υ ρ ο υ η ρ ο ο τ ι α τ ς ε π ε ν , Μ α κ ρ ι ν σ π ι ν μ λ λ ο ν δ ι δ ο ν α ι λ α μ β ν ε ι ν .

NLT Acts 20:35 And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

KJV Acts 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

ESV Acts 20:35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

ASV Acts 20:35 In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

CSB Acts 20:35 In every way I've shown you that by laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

NIV Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

NKJ Acts 20:35 "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

NRS Acts 20:35 In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

YLT Acts 20:35 all things I did shew you, that, thus labouring, it behoveth us to partake with the ailing, to be mindful also of the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

- **showed:** Ac 20:20,27
- **that:** Isa 35:3 Ro 15:1 1Co 9:12 2Co 11:9,12, 12:13 Eph 4:28 1Th 4:11 1Th 5:14 Heb 12:12,13, 13:3
- **It is:** Ps 41:1-3 112:5-9 Pr 19:17 Isa 32:8 58:7-12 Mt 10:8 25:34-40 Luke 14:12-14 2Co 8:9 9:6-12 Php 4:17-20 Heb 13:16
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## AN EXAMPLE TO IMITATE

**In everything** - All the things Paul did by word and deed while he was among the saints at Ephesus.

Paul commanded the saints at Corinth (and by application ALL disciples):

**Be** ([present imperative](#) - make this your daily practice - be careful - the only way to do this is by jettisoning self reliance and relying wholly [the Holy Spirit to obey!](#) Successful obedience to supernatural commands calls for continual reliance on supernatural enablement!) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ. (1 Cor 11:1+)

**I showed you** (5263)(**hupodeiknumi** from **hupó** = under + **deiknuo** = show, make known the character or significance of something by visual, auditory, gestural, or linguistic means) literally means to show by placing under (as under one's gaze or before one's eyes) and so to show or instruct plainly, to set before one's eyes, to exemplify by words or actions. The idea is to direct someone's attention to something and so to point out or make known. In some context the idea is to warn (Mt 3:7, Lk 3:7, 12:5) Note that some lexicons state that the original meaning is to show secretly (Liddell-Scott).

**Marvin Vincent** says **hupodeiknumi** "means to **show by example**. Thus, Luke 6:47, "I will show you to whom he is like," is followed by the illustration of the man who built upon the rock. So Acts 9:16. God will show Paul by practical experience how great things he must suffer. The kindred noun **hupodeigma** is always rendered example or pattern. See John 13:15; Jas. 5:10, etc.; and note on 2Pe 2:6. -- In all things I gave you an example.

By Paul's 3 plus years of **teaching** and **conduct**, he had clearly demonstrated his practice of **working hard**. What Paul *said* was fully substantiated by what he *did*, and it . This is integrity - when one's *life* matches one's *lips*.

#### Related Resources:

- A Few Thoughts on Integrity
- Word Study on Sincere

The **NAS** translates **hupodeiknumi** as show(2), showed(1), warn(1), warned(2).

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who **warned** you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Luke 3:7 So he began saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who **warned** you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Luke 6:47 "Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will**show** you whom he is like:

Luke 12:5 "But I will **warn** you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!

Acts 9:16 for I (Jesus) will **show** him (Paul) how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

Acts 20:35 "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

**Hupodeiknumi** - 23x in the non-apocryphal [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - 1Chr 28:18; 2Chr 15:3; 20:2; Esther 1:1; 2:10, 20; 3:4; 4:7; 5:11; 8:1; Jer 31:19; Dan 2:17; 4:1, 8; 5:7, 9, 12, 16; 9:22f; 10:14, 21; 11:2

**Working Hard** (2872)(**kopiao** from **kopos** = labor, fatigue) The root word **kopos** is used in secular Greek of "a beating," "weariness" (as though one had been beaten) and "**exertion**," was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work, exertion or heat. **Kopiao** means to to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion. To become physically worn out, weary or faint. **Kopiao** can also convey that the hard work may include difficulty and trouble. Paul uses the **present tense** which pictures continual wearying work! He was ever a man on mission, redeeming the short time he had be allotted because he knew the days were evil (Eph 5:16+). And remember that all believers are commanded to continually imitate his example even as he imitated his Lord (1Cor 11:1+).

Acts 18:2-3 (At Corinth) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade (**tentmaker**), he stayed with them and they were working; for by trade they were **tent-makers**.

1Thess 2:9+ (At Thessalonica) For you recall, brethren, our labor and hardship, how working night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

**You must help the weak** - Take up the cause of the weak, presumably the "economically" weak and the physically weak who are unable to work. Notice how this passage supports his earlier statement that he had not coveted riches (Acts 20:33).

Paul's ministry was exemplary in every respect and set the bar high not only for the shepherds (elders) but the sheep. You may be a sheep, but you are still leaving an example for someone, influencing them by your words and deeds. Are you being careful how you conduct yourself? What is the "Gospel" according to your life?

**Barnes** comments...To provide for the wants of the sick and feeble members of the flock, who are unable to labour for themselves. The weak here denote the poor, the needy, the infirm.

**Must** (**present tense** = speaks of a continual obligation) ([1163](#))(**dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability.**Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place.

**Help** ([482](#))(**antilambano** from **anti** = mutually or against + **lambáno** = to take, to hold) means to take hold of another as by the hand. Figuratively **antilambano** meant to support from falling as if taking them by the hand to help, support or assist them. To come to the aid of.

**Antilambano** in 1Ti 6:2 has another meaning -- "to give or commit oneself wholeheartedly to something" or "to experience the benefit from someone" (Louw-Nida). "to commit oneself wholeheartedly to something, take part in, devote oneself to, practice" (BDAG). Friberg says antilambano in 1Ti 6:2 probably means "benefit from, receive benefit from something" or less likely "devote oneself to something" (Friberg)

**Marvin Vincent** - The verb means to lay hold on: thence to grasp helpfully or to help. To lay hold in the sense of partaking (1Ti 6:2), carries us back to the primitive meaning of the word according to its composition: to receive instead of, or in return (*anti*), and suggests the old phrase to take up for, espouse the cause of. Wycliffe's Version of the NT, has took up, but probably not in this sense.

**Antilambano** - 3x in NAS - here are the other two uses...

Luke 1:54+ "He has **given help** to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,

1 Timothy 6:2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who **partake** of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

**Antilambano** - 55x in the non-apocryphal [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) -

Gen 48:17; Lev 25:35; 1Kgs 9:9, 11; 1Chr 22:17; 2Chr 7:22; 28:15, 23; 29:34; Ps 3:5; 18:35; 20:2; 40:11; 41:12; 48:3; 63:8; 69:29; 89:43; 107:17; 118:13; 119:116; 139:13; Pr 11:28; Isa 9:7; 26:3; 41:9; 42:1; 49:26; 51:18; 59:16; 63:5; 64:7; Jer 23:14; Ezek 12:14; 16:49; 20:5f; Dan 6:27; Mic 6:6;

**Weak** ([770](#))(**astheneo** from **asthenes** [see study] = without strength, powerless from **a** = without + **sthenos** = strength, bodily vigor) means to be feeble (in any sense), to be diseased, impotent, sick, to lack strength, to be infirm, to be weak. Figuratively **astheneo** can refer to incapability of any kind.

**Astheneo** has three main senses (1) Be sick, (2) be weak, (3) be in need.**Paul's** use of the **present tense** suggests these individuals are chronically incapacitated.

**Remember the words of the Lord Jesus** - Always a good exhortation! Barnes adds that the idea is "To call to mind for encouragement, and with the force of a command."

**Remember** (**present tense** = continually recall) ([3421](#))(**mnemoneuo** (**mnemoneuo** from **mimnesko** = to recall to one's mind) means to exercise memory, call something to mind, recollect, to pay attention to something.

**Webster's 1828** definition of **remember** - To have in the mind an idea which had been in the mind before, and which recurs to the mind without effort (**Ed comment**: I think in the NT sense we often need to make a conscious effort, a volitional choice to remember. And we have the Spirit to aid our recall - cp Jn 14:26, 1Co 2:12, 13). When we use effort to recall an idea, we are said to recollect it. This distinction is not always observed. Hence remember is often used as synonymous with recollect, that is, to call to mind. We say, we cannot remember a fact, when we mean, we cannot recollect it. ([Click for all 15 definitions of remember](#))

## GIVING LIKE GOD!

**He Himself said "It is more blessed to give than to receive"** - This specific saying is not recorded in the Gospels. Note that Jesus is not saying that the recipients of another's generosity are less blessed! Indeed they are! Note also that Paul is not advocating that we be great givers in order to curry favor with our Father or even worse to try to barter our way into heaven. The Father is satisfied ([propitiated](#)) only with the greatest gift of His Son's sacrificial death.

As **Steven Cole** emphasizes...

Before you can give anything that pleases God, you must first receive God's **free gift** of eternal life (Ro 5:15+, Ro 5:16+, Ro 6:23+, Ro 3:24+). You must come to God as a poor sinner, unable to pay the debt that you owe, and receive the forgiveness that He has provided freely for you, but at great cost to Himself. Jesus' death is the only satisfaction for our sins before the holy God. He offers this unspeakable gift to everyone who will receive it (Jn 1:11, 12, 13). **Receiving God's salvation in Christ is the starting point for becoming a giver, because it is the starting point of being conformed in your character to the Lord Jesus.** Thus if we are becoming givers, although we can never match what Jesus did or even think of paying Him back, we are being more conformed to His image (Ro 8:29+), and we will be blessed (Ed: E.g., see Lk 14:13-14, Jas 1:25+)....

(Cole continues with a story of the) late billionaire J. Paul Getty had payphones installed in his mansion for his house guests to use, because he didn't want to pay for their long distance calls! Needless to say, those guests were not there because of the warm feelings that they had for J. Paul Getty! Stingy, greedy people cut themselves off from close relationships with others. Think of how greed has often divided family members from one another because they think that they are not getting their fair share of the inheritance of a departed "loved one," who was not very loved! Greed destroys close relationships, but givers know the joy of deep and enduring relationships with others.

Givers are invariably people of faith, because you have to trust in God to give away money that you easily could spend on yourself. People of faith are people of prayer, because it is through prayer that we receive from God's bountiful supply. So it was fitting that Paul knelt down with these men and prayed with them before he got on board the ship. He probably prayed that God would keep them from false teachers, that each man would be a godly example to the flock, and that through them the church would be built up and expand all over Asia. And he probably prayed that God would meet their needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19+). These men grieved at the thought of never seeing Paul again, because they knew that this generous man loved them, and they loved him.

So givers are blessed because they are freed from the destructive sin of greed; they are being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ; and, they have deep and enduring relationships with others. But there is a fourth reason that givers are blessed. It is not explicit in our text, although it is implicit here and explicit elsewhere - Givers are blessed because they will reap eternal rewards....those who have received God's gift of eternal life will reap rewards in heaven in proportion to their stewardship of money in this life. Unlike our investments in this uncertain world, that can be lost in a market crash, our investments in heaven are secure from every source of loss (See 1Ti 6:17-19)...How can you put a price on an investment that yields eternal dividends? If you give to further the Lord's work, you will someday be welcomed into eternal dwellings by many friends who are there because you gave (Luke 16:1-9).

Years ago, a lady was filling a box for missionaries in India. A child came to her door to give her a penny, all that the child had, to be used for the Lord. With this coin, the missionary bought a tract and put it into the box. Eventually, this gospel leaflet came into the hands of a Burmese chief, and God used it to bring him to salvation. The chief told the story of his conversion to his friends, and many of them believed in Christ and threw away their idols. They built a church there, sent out a missionary, and at least 1,500 natives were converted. All this, and probably more, resulted from a little girl's gift of one penny for Jesus ("Our Daily Bread," 12/70). ([Sermon](#))

The essence of Paul's quote from Jesus is implied by Christ in a general sense in the following passages...

Luke 6:38 "**Give, and it will be given to you;** good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

Mt 10:8 "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons; **freely you received, freely give.**

**NET Bible note comment:** The saying (*more blessed to give...*) is similar to Mt 10:8. Service and generosity should be abundant. Interestingly, these exact words are not found in the gospels. Paul must have known of this saying from some other source.

**Guzik** - His parting words, taken from a quote of Jesus' unrecorded in the gospels, are perfect for all who would minister to God's people: It is more blessed to give than to receive. Ministers must be more concerned about what they can give their flock than concerned about what their flock can give them. This is the best beatitude of all. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told us how to be blessed; here, He tells us how to be more blessed! It should not stumble us to consider that Jesus taught many things unrecorded in the gospels; John said as much in Jn 21:25. But we can trust that God has preserved all that is necessary of the

teaching of Jesus. ([Acts 20 Commentary Notes](#))

**Brian Bell**...More blessed it is, because it is more God-like; It is more fruitful; It is the consequence & consummation of receiving. ([Sermon Notes](#))

**David G Peterson** sums up this section noting that Paul's...letters encourage believers to finance gospel ministry (1 Cor. 9:13-14; Gal. 6:6), and he himself accepted gifts from some churches (Phil. 4:10-19), but not others (1 Cor. 9:6-18; 2 Cor. 11:7-11; 12:16-18). However, his aim here is to warn leaders of the dangers inherent in their position and to commend his own solution to the problem of greed. Covetousness spoils relationships and hinders the work of the gospel, since those who are seeking to advance themselves materially will be tempted to evaluate their contacts and ministry opportunities in economic terms. ([Acts of the Apostles Pillar New Testament Commentary](#))

**Steven Cole** tells this **story**...Early one morning years ago an American serviceman was making his way back to the barracks in London. He saw a little boy with his nose pressed to the window of a bakery, staring in silence. The serviceman's heart went out to the little boy, probably an orphan. "Son, would you like some of those?" "Oh, yeah, I would!" The serviceman stepped inside and bought a dozen. He took the bag outside to the boy and said, "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He heard the child ask quietly, "Mister, are you God?" When we give, we act as God does. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son ..." (John 3:16). As God's people, we should be givers, not only at the Christmas season, but as a way of life. ([Sermon](#))

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**IS IT BLESSED TO RECEIVE?** - We admire people who take responsibility for their lives and try not to burden others. Such self-sufficiency is commendable. But if every needy person in the world --and that includes all of us at one time or another--refused help, there would be no opportunity for anyone to give.

When we read Jesus' statement in Acts 20:35 that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," we tend to focus only on the virtue of giving. Our Lord did not say that it's undesirable to accept a gift, but that by comparison our goal should be to give, not to get. Actually, both giving and receiving are commendable, enriching, and even necessary.

Perhaps it's risky in a greedy age to extol receiving. Yet many sincere, well-meaning people hesitate when offered this lesser but equally valid blessing. They say, "Oh, I can't take that!" or "You really shouldn't."

Why are we like this? Personally, I've concluded that it's often because I don't want to feel indebted to others, or I'm proud, or I want to have control. But these hidden attitudes are selfish and run contrary to the spirit of Him who said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Perhaps we need to give others the blessing of giving by learning to be a gracious receiver. - Dennis J. De Haan [Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

I gave out of abundant pride  
And blessing took its leave,  
Till humbly to the Lord I cried,  
And learned how to receive.

**Grateful receiving, like gracious giving  
comes from the heart.**

**Acts 20:36** When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.: [Kai tauta eipon](#) (AAPMSN) [theis](#) (AAPMSN) [ta gonata autou sun pasin autois](#) proseucato.(3SAMI):

NET Acts 20:36 When he had said these things, he knelt down with them all and prayed.

GNT Acts 20:36 Κα τα τα ε πι ν θε ς τ γ να τα α το σ ν π σι ν α το ς προση ξα το.

NLT Acts 20:36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them.

KJV Acts 20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

ESV Acts 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

ASV Acts 20:36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.

CSB Acts 20:36 After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them.

NIV Acts 20:36 When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

NKJ Acts 20:36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

NRS Acts 20:36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed.

YLT Acts 20:36 And these things having said, having bowed his knees, with them all, he did pray,

- **Knelt:** Ac 7:60 21:5 2Ch 6:13 Da 6:10 Luke 22:41 Eph 3:14 Php 4:6

**When he had said these things** - In a sense Paul seals his last words with a final offering to God, a good pattern for times of meeting with our brethren. Do you pray before your brethren depart?

## PRAYER POSTURE

**Jack Arnold** - Paul undoubtedly prayed this prayer, not only to ask God's blessing on the elders and the Ephesian local church but to remind the elders that they could not govern the local church without much prayer. Every elder must be a man committed to individual prayer and group prayer; that is, he is to pray with other elders and the congregation. A prayerless board of elders is doomed to failure! There should always be this kind of love between elders and between the elders and the congregation. A godly display of emotion is pleasing to Christ and certainly builds up the body of Christ. ([Acts 20:28-38 Concerns of a Shepherd](#))

**Knelt down** - This description of the posture of prayer is interesting in light of the fact that pious Jews would pray standing (Mt 6:5, Mt 11:25, Lk 18:11, 13, Ps 134:1, NAS has "serve" but ESV & KJV are better = "stand" which is also "stand" in Lxx, Ps 135:2). One pious Jew however gave us an example to follow in His steps (1Peter 2:21+), by **knelling** in [Gethsemane](#) (Luke 22:41).

**Barnes** comments - The usual attitude of prayer. It is the proper posture of a suppliant. It indicates reverence and humility; and is represented in the Scriptures as the usual attitude of devotion, 2 Ch. 6:13; Da. 6:10; Lk 22:41; Acts 7:60; 9:40; 21:5; Ro 11:4; Phi. 2:10; Ep. 3:14; Mk. 1:40.

**Prayed** (4336) ([proseuchomai](#) from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun [proseuche](#)).

**Proseuchomai** in Acts - clearly prayer was a vital dynamic in the early church as emphasized by frequent use by Luke. Acts 1:24; Acts 6:6; Acts 8:15; Acts 9:11; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:9; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:5; Acts 12:12; Acts 13:3; Acts 14:23; Acts 16:25; Acts 20:36; Acts 21:5; Acts 22:17; Acts 28:8;

**Acts 20:37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and repeatedly kissed him,:** [hikanos de klauthmos egeneto](#) (3SAMI) [panton, kai epipesontes](#) (AAPMPN) [epi ton trachelon tou Paulou katephiloun](#) (3PIAI) [auton,:](#)

NET Acts 20:37 They all began to weep loudly, and hugged Paul and kissed him,

GNT Acts 20:37 καν ς δ κλαυθμ ς γ νετο π ντων κα πιπεσ ντες π τ ν τρ χηλον το Πα λου κατεφ λου α τ ν,

NLT Acts 20:37 They all cried as they embraced and kissed him good-bye.

KJV Acts 20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

ESV Acts 20:37 And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him,

ASV Acts 20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,

CSB Acts 20:37 There was a great deal of weeping by everyone. They embraced Paul and kissed him,

NIV Acts 20:37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.

NKJ Acts 20:37 Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,

NRS Acts 20:37 There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him,

YLT Acts 20:37 and there came a great weeping to all, and having fallen upon the neck of Paul, they were kissing him,

- **Weep aloud:** 1Sa 20:41 2Sa 15:30 2Ki 20:3 Ezra 10:1 Job 2:12 Ps 126:5 2Ti 1:4 Rev 7:17 21:4
- **embraced:** Ge 45:14, 46:29
- **kissed:** Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 2Co 13:12, 1Th 5:26
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Young's Literal** - and there came a great weeping to all, and having fallen upon the neck of Paul, they were kissing him

**Frank Allen** - As in the case of Paul and the Ephesian elders, tears may sometimes dim our eyes, but Oh! how much better it is to have our eyes dimmed with tears than to have our hearts remain cold with neglect and sin! ([The Acts of the Apostles](#))

**Embraced Paul** - They "fell on his neck" and repeatedly kissed him, as Middle Eastern men do to this day when greeting one another. This scene indicates a deep and tender mutual brotherly love, similar to the scene in Ge 46:29 when Joseph met his aged father Jacob after years of separation.

**Brian Bell** - It takes a minute to say hello and forever to say goodbye! How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard. - Carol Sobieski and Thomas Meehan, Annie

**Kissed** (2705) (**kataphileo** from **kata** = intensifies the verb + **phileo** = to love, kiss, cp **philos** = loved, dear, friend) means to kiss fervently, eagerly. **Liddell Scott** says "to kiss tenderly, to caress, Xen."

**Paul** uses the **imperfect tense** which vividly pictures the elders as over and over ("repeatedly") demonstrating their fond affection to their beloved teacher and friend. What a contrast with the wicked kiss of Judas to one he hailed as Rabbi (but not as friend)! Compare the similar use of a deceptively "affectionate" treacherous kiss in 2Sa 20:9,10!

**Vine** comments "the stronger force of this verb (**phileo**) has been called in question, but the change from **phileo** to **Kataphileo** in Matt. 26:49 and Mark 14:45 can scarcely be without significance, and the act of the traitor was almost certainly more demonstrative than the simple kiss of salutation. So with the kiss of genuine devotion, Luke 7:38, 45; 15:20; Acts 20:37, in each of which this verb is used.

**Vincent** - The compound verb has the force of an emphatic, ostentatious salute. Meyer says embraced and kissed. The same word is used of the tender caressing of the Lord's feet by the woman in the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:38), of the father's embrace of the returned prodigal (Luke 15:20), and of the farewell of the Ephesian elders to Paul (Acts 20:37).

**Kataphileo** - 6x in 6v - Matthew 26:49 Immediately Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and **kissed** Him.

Mark 14:45 After coming, Judas immediately went to Him, saying, "Rabbi!" and **kissed** Him.

Luke 7:38 and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and **kissing** His feet and anointing them with the perfume.

Luke 7:45 "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased **to kiss** My feet.

Luke 15:20 "So he (**the prodigal son**) got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and **kissed** him.

Acts 20:37 And they began to weep aloud and embraced Paul, and **repeatedly kissed** him,

**Kataphileo** - 14x in the non-apocryphal [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Gen 31:28, 55; 45:15; Ex 4:27; Ruth 1:9, Ru 1:14+; 1Sa 20:41; 2Sa 14:33; 15:5; 19:39; 2Sa 20:9; 1Kgs 2:19; 19:20; Ps 85:10;

The psalmist writes...Ps 85:10 [see Spurgeon's lengthy note](#) Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have **kissed** each other.

The use of **Kataphileo** in Ruth especially pictures the tender affection expressed in this verb...Ruth 1:9+ (Naomi to Ruth and Orpah - encouraging them to return to Moab - a heart wrenching moment) "May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she **kissed** (kataphileo) them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Acts 20:38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship: [odunomenoi](#) (PPPMPN) [malista epi to logo o eirekei](#) (3SPLUPERFECTAI) [oti ouketi mellousin](#) (3PPAI) [to prosopon autou theorein](#). (PAN) [proepempon](#) (3PIAI) [de auton eis to ploion](#). :

NET Acts 20:38 especially saddened by what he had said, that they were not going to see him again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

GNT Acts 20:38 δυν μνοι μ λιστα π τ λ γ ε ρ κει, π ο κ π μ λλουσιν τ π ρ σωπον α το θεωρε ν. προ πεμπον δ α τ ν ε ς τ πλο ον.

NLT Acts 20:38 They were sad most of all because he had said that they would never see him again. Then they escorted him down to the ship.

KJV Acts 20:38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

ESV Acts 20:38 being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

ASV Acts 20:38 sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

CSB Acts 20:38 grieving most of all over his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him to the ship.

NIV Acts 20:38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

NKJ Acts 20:38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

NRS Acts 20:38 grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

YLT Acts 20:38 sorrowing most of all for the word that he had said -- that they are about no more to see his face; and they were accompanying him to the ship.

- **That they would not see:** Ac 20:25
- **And they were accompanying him:** Ac 15:3 21:5,16 1Co 16:11
- [Acts 20 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BELIEVERS' GOOD BYES ARE ONLY TEMPORARY**

It is only natural that they would grieve after Paul had spent almost 3 years among them and they had undoubtedly become very close personal friends. This is a good picture for all of us and also a challenge. When I was growing up my mother would frequently have the pastor and his family over for church. We got to know his family "like family." But as churches have grown in size (and busyness) it seem the gap between shepherd and sheep has widened and this is a sad dynamic. We need to return to the days of the first church so that might share one another's lives in such a way that if one departs (to another post or eternal life), we are grieved for a moment, and yet joyful for we know that the good byes of believers are only temporary. I like to tell the undertaker we only want to rent the plot of land for a few years! You should see their face!

**Grieving** (present tense = continual grieving)(3600)(**odunao** from **odune** = sorrow, torment, grief, pain) means actively to cause intense pain but is used only passively in the NT to describe experiencing (suffering) intense physical pain (Lk 16:24 = Hades) or to experience mental and/or spiritual pain manifest by being grieved, anxious, very worried, deeply distressed.

**The NAS translates odunao** - agony(1), am in agony(1), anxiously(1), grieving(1)and the KJV as sorrow 2, torment 2.

**Odunao** - only 4x in Scripture

Luke 2:48 When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been **anxiously** looking for You."

Luke 16:24 "And he (Lazarus) cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so

that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in **agony** in this flame.'

Luke 16:25 "But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.

Acts 20:38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

**H C Trumbull** - It is the measure of hope which gives joy or sorrow to a parting. To part with a loved one in the morning, in the confident expectation of meeting again at the day's close, hardly causes a twinge of sorrow to the most sensitive heart. A parting which looks forward to a reunion at the close of a summer's vacation, or of a European tour, or on the return of an anniversary gathering, has more of brightness than of shadow in its firmament. But when the parting is with a soldier son or brother, who is starting out for active service at the front; or with a missionary worker who leaves his country with no thought of a return to it; or, when for any reason the hope of another meeting in this life is faint or is lacking—then its sadness is intensified. So it is when the parting is at the grave's border. Even the brightest-hearted Christian has a right to have sorrow in parting with a loved friend, with no hope of seeing him again on earth. It is not that the friend is a loser by passing out from earth's prison house; but it is that he who remains here shall see that friend's face no more. But even in such a parting, believers in Christ can have hope of a meeting beyond the grave; and this hope it is which should encourage the believer to sorrow not as those who have no hope. (Biblical Illustrator).

**Word (3056)**(**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words.

**See his face again** - "to see his face" (an idiom for seeing someone in person)." (NET Bible Note)

**See (2334)**(**theoreo** from **theaomai** = to look at closely or attentively or contemplatively - even with a sense of wonder; **ᾠθεορός** = a spectator) (Gives us English = theater, theorize) usually refers to physical sight but can also refer to perception and understanding. It means to gaze, to look with interest and purpose, to carefully examine with emphasis on or attention to details. To behold intensely or attentively. Our English word *scrutinize* conveys this sense, for it means to examine closely and minutely. To be a spectator and thus to understand or perceive. To contemplate (Heb 13:7). **Theoreo** in some contexts can include the idea of to behold with amazement. For example, in Mark 5:15 **theoreo** is not translated merely "**see**" but "**observe**" for as **Vincent** explains...

(theoreo) was more than simple seeing. The verb means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object, and with a view to search into and understand it: to look inquiringly and intently. (**Ed Note:** And even with a sense of amazement.)

**Summary** (from BDAG and other sources)...

**(1) To observe something with sustained attention, be a spectator**-- look at, observe, perceive, see (with physical eyes), "to observe something with continuity and attention, often with the implication that what is observed is something unusual" (Louw Nida) (Acts 7:56, Mark 16:14) This sense denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. E.g., in Jn1:14 **beheld** implies that Jesus' stay upon earth though brief, was such that his followers could calmly and leisurely contemplate His glory. In the **Septuagint (Lxx)** **theoreo** in Ps 66:18 describes the object of the contemplation as wickedness ("**regard** wickedness"). Rapt contemplation of a vision as in Jn 2:23 where they were **beholding** His signs.

The idea of **theoreo** is not that of an indifferent spectator, but one who deliberately contemplates, one who looks at with interest and attention and even with a critical, discriminating inspection.

**(2) To come to the understanding of something** - To notice, perceive, observe, find (Acts 17:22); "to come to understand as the result of perception—"to understand, to perceive, to see, to recognize." (Heb 7:4, Ro 7:23, Jas 2:24) (**Vincent** says **theoreo** in 1Jn 3:17 where on "**sees** his brother in need" is better rendered "deliberately contemplates")

**Theoreo** means looking steadfastly, as one who has an interest in the object with view to search into and understand and thus to look inquiringly and intently. E.g., in Mk 5:15 they **observed** the man who had been demon-possessed.

a. esp. on the basis of what one has seen and heard (Acts 4:13, Jn 4:19)

b. of the spiritual perception of the one sent by God, which is possible only to the believer (Jn 14:17, 14:19b)

c. Figurative extension of seeing meaning to undergo or experience (Jn 8:51)

**Wuest** on **theaomai**...

(Comment on Mk 3:11) It is used primarily, not of an indifferent spectator, but of one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose. It would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army, while **theaomai** would be used of a civilian looking at the parade. **Theōreō** would include within its meaning a critical, understanding investigation, while **theaomai** would speak of the mere registering of impressions. The demons exhibited interest and purpose in their critical observation of the Lord Jesus. They looked at Him with a practiced eye, long used to the measuring of the good and the true as exhibited in the character of God. They recognized in Him the embodiment of the holiness out from the presence of which they were driven when the angel Lucifer fell and became Satan, in whose fall they shared because they followed him in his rebellion against the Most High.

**Vincent** on **theaomai** in Luke 10:18 "The verb denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. So John 1:14, we beheld, implying that Jesus' stay upon earth, though brief, was such that his followers could calmly and leisurely contemplate his glory. Compare John 2:23: "they beheld (**theaomai**) his miracles," thoughtfully and attentively. Here it denotes the rapt contemplation of a vision."

**Vincent** describes the difference between **theaomai** and **theoreo**...Both **theoreo** imply deliberate contemplation, but the former is gazing with a view to satisfy the eye, while the latter is beholding more critically, with an inward spiritual or mental interest in the thing beheld, and with a view to acquire knowledge about it. "**Theoreo** would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army; **theaomai** of a lay spectator looking at the parade" (Thayer).

**Vine** adds that ...The difference between this verb and **blepo** and **horao** (= "see" of bodily vision) is brought out in John 20:5,6,8; in Jn 20:5 **blepo** is used of John's sight of the linen cloths in the tomb, without his entering in; he "saw" at a glance the Lord was not there; in Jn 20:6 **the closer contemplation by Peter is expressed in the verb theoreo** But in Jn 20:8 the grasping by John of the significance of the undisturbed cloths is denoted by **horao**. " ([W E Vine-see A-9](#))

**Wayne Detzler** has a helpful comparison of the 3 main NT words used to describe vision...

In the New Testament three main words speak of seeing, and each one has a distinctive flavor.

The most common is the word **horao**. It appears more than 350 times in the New Testament. It means to have personal experience of something or someone. Its emphasis falls on participation. From a physical standpoint, this word speaks of "catching sight" of someone or something. On the first Easter Sunday morning an angel assured the disciples that they would "**behold**" (**horao**) the Lord (Mt 28:7, 10). In the same vein the disciples had **seen** the miracles that Jesus did. They were not just figments of their fertile imaginations (John 4:45). Indirectly Jesus claimed, to the amazement and anger of the Pharisees, that He had **seen** Abraham's days (John 8:57). This word relates to the experience of seeing, to physical vision. **Horao** also expresses spiritual vision. Jesus warned the disciples to "**Watch out**," to be on their guard and not be taken in by the Pharisees (Mt. 16:6). The same word was used in a totally different context when Judas rued his treachery against Christ, and the Jewish authorities told him to **look out** for himself (Mt 27:4). So in a figurative sense this word means to look out for dangers.

A second word is **blepo**, which appears about 137 times in the Greek New Testament...the main thrust concerns the ability to see, sight in contrast with blindness. Other related concepts are reading, the perception of a truth, and a prophetic vision....Jesus employed this word when He spoke of seeing a speck of dust in your brother's eye, while ignoring a log in your own eye (Mt 7:3). (**Ed Note:** Blepo = ability to see as distinct from blindness - Mt. 12:22; 15:31; Mk 8:23, 24; Lk 7:21; Jn 9:7, 15, 19, 21, 25)

There is a third word which is used only 58 times. This is **theoreo**. The English reader can easily see that this word is related to "theory." Here the viewer is a spectator enjoying the spectacle and theorizing about its meaning...**Theoreo**...combines ideas from the other two words. In fact, its basic meaning seems to be prolonged contemplation. When Jesus was being crucified, many of the women who followed Him **gazed** at the spectacle of His crucifixion (Mt 27:55). This verse brings up a thorny issue. Why is it that women often demonstrated a greater fidelity in following the Lord than men did? The same word is used by Christ in describing devotion to Himself. Contemplation is seen as essential to discipleship. Followers are ones who behold the Lord, who do not lose sight of Him (Jn 6:40)....**Theoreo** has a figurative meaning. The Samaritan saw that Jesus was a Prophet (4:19). In the same way Paul saw through the religious practices of the Athenians (Acts 17:22). (**Ed Note:** **Theoreo** = to look at a thing with interest and with care for details - Mk 15:47; Lk 10:18; 23:35; Jn 20:6, 12, 14)

Therefore the words used for sight in the New Testament are similar to their English counterparts. All three have a physical application, what one sees with his eyes. They also have a figurative usage, that which is

seen by mental perception....All three of these words occur in the New Testament, and each of them has a distinctive role. Together they give a picture of sight and vision in the Greek New Testament. ([New Testament words in today's language- Wayne A Detzler](#))

**NAS** translates theoreo as beholds(1), look(1), looking(5), observe(3), observed(4), observing(3), perceive(2), saw(8), see(16), seeing(2), seen(1), sees(4), watched(1), watching(2).

**Theoreo** - 58x in 56v - Take a moment to study the passages (checking the context may be necessary) and you will begin to understand that **theoreo** means more than simply **seeing**.

Matthew 27:55 Many women were there **looking** on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him.

Matthew 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to **look** at the grave.

**Comment:** Theoreo is used here to indicate the intent of the two Mary's to observe the details about the tomb of Christ for the purpose of meditating upon the holy event. They were not just coming to see the grave, but to behold the grave, expecting to be affected by the entombment of Christ.

Mark 3:11 Whenever the unclean spirits **saw** Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "You are the Son of God!"

Mark 5:15 They came to Jesus and **observed** the man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the "legion"; and they became frightened.

Mark 5:38 They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He **saw** a commotion, and people loudly weeping and wailing.

Mark 12:41 And He sat down opposite the treasury, and began **observing** how the people were putting money into the treasury; and many rich people were putting in large sums.

Mark 15:40 There were also some women **looking** on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome.

Mark 15:47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were **looking** on to see where He was laid.

Mark 16:4 Looking up, they **saw** that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

Luke 10:18 And He said to them, "I was **watching** Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

Luke 14:29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who **observe** it begin to ridicule him,

Luke 21:6 "As for these things which you are **looking** at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down."

Luke 23:35 And the people stood by, **looking** on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One."

Luke 23:48 And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they **observed** what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.

**Comment:** They were contemplative spectators, men and women who could later describe what took place.

Luke 24:37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were **seeing** a spirit.

Luke 24:39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you **see** that I have."

John 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, **observing** His signs which He was doing.

John 4:19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I **perceive** that You are a prophet.

John 6:2 A large crowd followed Him, because they **saw** the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

John 6:19 Then, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they **saw** Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat; and they were frightened.

John 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who **beholds** (present tense) the Son and believes (present tense) in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

**Vine comments: Theoreo** here indicates a close contemplation or careful perusal, and the meaning is, "everyone who contemplates the Son with the effect of believing on Him." (**Ed Note:** In this passage Jesus uses theoreo essentially as a synonym of believing) It was not so with the Jews. They had **seen** Him (**horao**) and did not believe (Jn 6:36 where "have seen" = horao, used also in Jn 9:36, 27 "have both **seen** Him"). **A person cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved without that measure of consideration of His person and work of redeeming grace which results in faith in Him. No mere passing consideration is sufficient.**

John 6:62 "What then if you **see** the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?"

John 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may **see** Your works which You are doing.

John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never **see** death."

**Comment: Theoreo** in this context and in Jn 17:24 means to experience or partake.

John 9:8 Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously **saw** him as a beggar, were saying, "Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?"

John 10:12 "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, **sees** the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

John 12:19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "You **see** that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him."

John 12:45 "He who sees Me **sees** the One who sent Me.

**Comment:** John 14:9 says "He who has seen me has seen the Father" -- This is "a different verb, **horao**...from that in Jn 12:45 (theōreō). **Theōreō** denotes to be a spectator of: it stresses the action of the beholder; **horao** lays more emphasis on the object beheld, upon the direction in which the vision goes. This is especially exemplified in the Lord's word here to the disciples, that the Father manifests Himself in the Son (cp. Jn 1:17, 18 which uses **horao**).

John 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not **see** Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

**Comment:** Theōreō is used in relation to seeing the Spirit of truth and means being affected by the Spirit of truth.

John 14:19 "After a little while the world will no longer **see** Me, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

John 16:10 and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer **see** Me;

John 16:16 "A little while, and you will no longer **see** Me; and again a little while, and you will see (horao - used also in same tense in 1Jn 3:2) Me."

John 16:17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not **see** Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father '?"

John 16:19 Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, "Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, 'A little while, and you will not **see** Me, and again a little while, and you will **see** Me'?"

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may **see** My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

**ESV Study Bible Note:** "to observe with sustained attention," and includes the idea of entering into and experiencing something.

John 20:6 And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he **saw** the linen wrappings lying there,

**Comment:** He did not just see them, but he "beheld" them, he scrutinized them, he examined them closely with a sense of amazement! And who wouldn't, for they were "empty" wrappings! Jesus was not dead but

alive, even as He had prophesied to the disciples.

John 20:12 and she **saw** two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

John 20:14 When she had said this, she turned around and **saw** Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

Acts 3:16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you **see** and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

Acts 4:13 Now as they **observed** the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

Acts 7:56 and he said, "**Behold**, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Acts 8:13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he **observed** signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Acts 9:7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but **seeing** no one.

Acts 10:11 and he **saw** the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was **observing** the city full of idols.

Acts 17:22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, **observe** that you are very religious in all respects.

Acts 19:26 "You **see** and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

Acts 20:38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not **see** his face again. And they were accompanying him to the ship.

Acts 21:20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, "You **see**, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

Acts 25:24 Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all you gentlemen here present with us, you **see** this man about whom all the people of the Jews appealed to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly declaring that he ought not to live any longer.

Acts 27:10 and said to them, "Men, **I perceive** that the voyage will certainly be with damage and great loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives."

Acts 28:6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had **seen** nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

Hebrews 7:4 Now **observe** how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and **sees** his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

**Vine comments:** Theoreo signifies something more than merely seeing, it suggests a definite contemplation of the brother's circumstances. The apostle John uses this word twenty-three times in the Gospel, and more frequently than any other New Testament writer, though this is the only place in his epistles.

**Dodd** says, "If such a minimal response to the law of charity, called for by such an everyday situation, is absent, then it is idle to pretend that we are within the family of God, the realm in which love is operative as the principle and the token of eternal life" (Johannine Epistles, p. 86).

Revelation 11:11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were **watching** them.

**Comment:** This will be the ultimate "theater!" The world watches intently and we astonishment.

Revelation 11:12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies **watched** them.

**Theoreo** -29x in the non-apocryphal [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) - Josh 8:20; Jdg 16:27; Ps 22:7; 27:4; 31:11; 50:18; 64:8; 66:18; 68:24; 73:3; Pr 15:30; 31:16; Eccl 7:11; Dan 2:31, 34; Da 3:24, 27; 4:10, 13; 5:5; 7:2, 4, 6f, 9, 11, 13, 21; 8:15. See nuances of "see" suggested by following uses in Lxx - Josh 8:20 = inhabitants of Ai **saw** smoke of their burning city! Jdg 16:27 = 3,000 were on the roof**looking** on while Samson was amusing them; Ps 22:7 = a prophecy speaking of **seeing** Jesus on the Cross. Dan 2:34 Nebuchadnezzar continued **looking** at the great statue.

**They were accompanying him to the ship** - "This reminds us that Paul was not a cold dispenser of doctrine, but a warm, pastoral man who loved his people greatly and won great love from them." (Guzik)

**Peterson** notes...Similar departure scenes in Acts 21:5-6, 12-14, show a surprising depth of relationship with Christians in Tyre and Caesarea, where he had not spent the same length of time as he did in Ephesus. Paul is sometimes misrepresented by his critics as a hard and austere man, lacking compassion and kindness. However, this passage is one of several challenging that distorted view (cf. 2Cor. 2:4; 1Th 1:7-8). ([Acts of the Apostles Pillar New Testament Commentary](#))

**Accompanying** (4311) (**propempe** from **pró** = before, + **pémpe** = to send) literally means to send before. In the NT the idea is to send forward on one's journey, to bring someone on his way, especially to accompany for some distance in token of respect and honor (as in the present passage). **Propempe** also conveys the idea of to help one forward on his journey, including furnishing things necessary for one's travel (1Cor 16:11).

**John Polhill** writes that "Propempō is used of accompanying or escorting people to their point of departure and often has the additional nuance of giving them food and provisions for their journey. That may well have been the case in this instance. ([New American Commentary – Volume 26: Acts](#))

**BDAG:** (1) to conduct someone who has a destination in mind, accompany, escort... (2) to assist someone in making a journey, send on one's way with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc

**NAS translates propempe** - accompanying(1), escorted(1), help(1), helped on my journey(1), helped on my way(1), journey(1), send...on his way(1), send...on my way(1), send...on their way(2), way(1). **Propempe** - 9x in 9v in the NT not in the non-apocryphal [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) -

Acts 15:3 Therefore, being **sent on their way** by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

Acts 20:38 grieving especially over the word which he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they were **accompanying** him to the ship.

Acts 21:5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our **journey**, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

Romans 15:24 whenever I go to Spain-- for I hope to see you in passing, and to **behelped on my way** there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while--

1 Corinthians 16:6 and perhaps I will stay with you, or even spend the winter, so that you may **send** me on my **way** wherever I may go.

1 Corinthians 16:11 So let no one despise him. But **send** him on his **way** in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren.

2 Corinthians 1:16 that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you **to be helped on my journey** to Judea.

Titus 3:13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos **on their way** so that nothing is lacking for them.

3 John 1:6 and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them **on their way** in a manner worthy of God.

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**Robert Moffat** laboured for more than fifty years in South Africa and chiefly at Kuruman. On Sunday, March 20, 1870, he preached for the last time in Kuruman church. In all that great congregation there were few of his own contemporaries. With a pathetic grace

he pleaded with those who still remained unbelieving. It was an impressive close to an impressive career. On the Friday following the aged missionary and his wife took their departure. As they came out of their house and walked to their waggon they were beset with crowds of the Bechuanas, each longing for a handshake and another word of farewell, and as the waggon drove away it was followed by all who could walk, and a long and pitiful wail arose, enough to melt the hardest heart.

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**Brian Bell closes his notes with an illustration** - A missionary returning home after many years of service was asked, "Tell me what you found when you arrived in New Guinea." "Found? I found something that looked more hopeless than if I had been sent into a jungle of tigers." "What do you mean?" "Why, the people seemed utterly devoid of moral sense. If a mother was carrying her little baby and the baby began to cry, she would throw it into the ditch and let it die. If a man saw his father break his leg, he would leave him by the roadside to suffer by himself. They had no compassion whatever. They didn't even know what the word meant." "Well, what did you do for them?" "I thought it best to show them my faith by my works! When I saw a baby crying, I picked it up and consoled it. When I saw a man with a broken leg, I sought to mend it. When I found people distressed and hungry, I took them in, comforted them, and fed them. Finally they inquired, 'What does this mean? Why are you doing this for us?' Then I had my chance, and I preached the gospel!" "Did you succeed?" "My friend," said the missionary, "when I returned home on furlough, I left a church!"

3.23. Prayer: Lord may we stay for awhile in peoples lives, that we might leave endearing footprints on their hearts! ([Sermon Notes](#))

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**Illustration of Farewells** - Feb. 11, 1861 When A. Lincoln left Springfield, IL, to start his inaugural journey to Washington, D.C., he paid an unforgettable tribute to his friends and neighbors in what is known today as the Farewell Address. "My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of the Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell." Lincoln's farewell address was brief (perhaps a minute) but very thoughtful. And spiritual, which is something that is often missing in our farewells today. As Christians we should always part company as best we can and as blessed as we can.

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**Paul's Parting Commendation to the Saints at Rome** - Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith; 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen. (Ro 16:25-27)