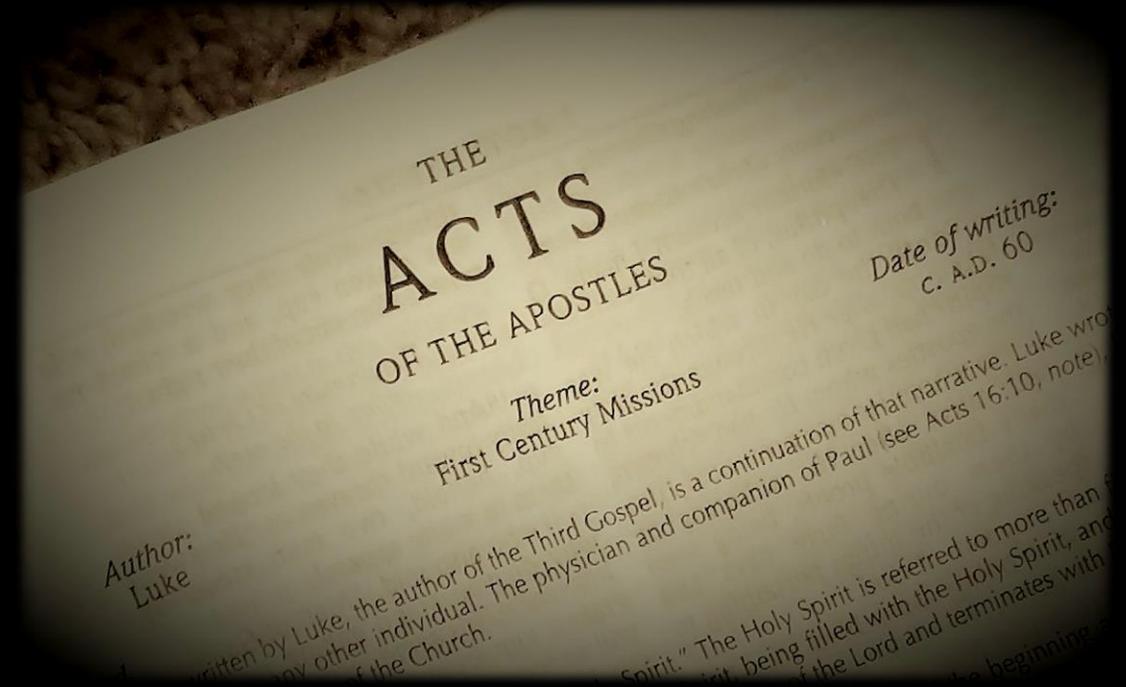


# Verse by Verse

## Acts 20



Previously in *Acts*

## Previously in Acts

- We have followed Paul through two missionary journeys and now we are in the midst of the third.
- In Acts 19, he was about to leave Ephesus where he had been for about three years.
- At that point a riot broke out over the impact Paul's evangelism was having on the local idolatry.

# Acts 20 Introduction

## Acts 20 Introduction

- This chapter begins with Paul leaving Ephesus.
- He will travel around the Aegean Sea encouraging the churches he planted in other regions.
- This probably took a lot more time than it appears in Luke's quick overview.
- In the end he comes back to spot near Ephesus where he meets with the elders.

## Acts 20 Introduction

*Encouragement is a key theme of this chapter. The verb parakaleo (“to encourage”) appears three times (vv. 1, 2, 12), and verses 18–35 give a sample of the content of the encouragement Paul gave.*

*– Ajith Fernando,  
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



# Acts 20    Key Verses

## Acts 20 Key Verses

- Acts 20:26-27 (ESV)

<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, <sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

# Acts 20 Outline

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1. Visiting the Churches 20:1-6
2. Raising Eutychus 20:7-16
3. The Ephesian Elders 20:17-38

# 1. Visiting the Churches    Acts 20:1-6

# 1. Visiting the Churches    Acts 20:1-6

- 20:1-2    Macedonia ... those regions ... much encouragement ... Greece
- Luke runs through this very quickly, but there is reason to believe it took a year or so.
- For one thing, in **Romans 15**, Paul mentions ministry in **Illyricum** – modern Albania and former Yugoslavia.
- Luke never records this for us but it would fit here.

# 1. Visiting the Churches     Acts 20:1-6

- 20:3     a plot was made against him by the Jews.
- One likely scenario here is that Paul wanted to get back to Jerusalem for Passover.
- If a lot of unbelieving Jews were planning to take the same ship, a plot could have been hatched by them.

# 1. Visiting the Churches    Acts 20:1-6

- 20:4-5    Notice the large team.
- This probably had to do with a big collection they were taking from the Gentile churches.
- For example, see 2 Corinthians 9.
- It was an offering to the Jewish church in Judea.

# 1. Visiting the Churches    Acts 20:1-6

- 20:6    waiting for us ... we sailed away
- In Acts 16, Luke switched from “he/they” to “we” in Troas and then back to “he/they” in Macedonia.
- Evidently Luke has been in Macedonia since that time.
- Now he switches from “he” (Paul) to “we” as if he is again part of the team as they leave that region.

# 1. Visiting the Churches    Acts 20:1-6

- Ministry is always a team effort.
- Jesus gathered disciples around him.
- In the end, he sent them out to make more disciples.
- That happens just as Paul is doing it here.
- We gather a team, share responsibilities and multiply the ministry – till Jesus comes!

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

- 20:7     On the first day of the week
- This is the first mention in the Bible of Christians meeting on Sunday rather than the Jewish Sabbath.
- We see it again in 1 Corinthians 16:2.
- The separation was probably out of necessity at first.
- Later, as more Gentiles joined the churches, there was little reason to back to the original Jewish practice.

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

- 20:7     he prolonged his speech until midnight
- 20:11   he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak
- Paul was obviously in no hurry to finish talking.
- This gives us a peek into the kind of meetings the first churches enjoyed – not all business, deadlines, etc.

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

- **20:8-12**     Having someone fall out the window and die would certainly disrupt a meeting!
- And yet Paul, like Peter and Jesus before him, raises the young man from the dead.
- Raising the dead does not happen often in the Bible, but it does happen.

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

### Raising the Dead in the Bible – Old Testament:

1. The widow of Zarephath's son (1 Kings 17 – Elijah)
2. The Shulamite woman's son (2 Kings 4 – Elisha)
3. The dead man who was thrown into the grave of Elisha (2 Kings 13 – Elisha, who was also dead!)

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

### Raising the Dead in the Bible – New Testament:

1. The widow of Nain's son (Luke 7 – Jesus)
2. Jairus's daughter (Luke 8 – Jesus)
3. Lazarus of Bethany (John 11 – Jesus)
4. Tabitha aka Dorcas (Acts 9 – Peter)
5. Eutychus in Troas (Acts 20 – Paul)

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

- 1 Corinthians 15:19, 42-44 (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied ... <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.

## 2. Raising Eutychus     Acts 20:7-16

- **20:13-16**     Here Luke simply describes the trip.
- An interesting detail is that Paul wanted to walk part of the way himself – **about 30 miles** by land.
- They sailed past **Ephesus** so that Paul could meet with the elders alone – rather than spend time in the city.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

A. Past Ministry      20:18-21

B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

A. Past Ministry      20:18-21

B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

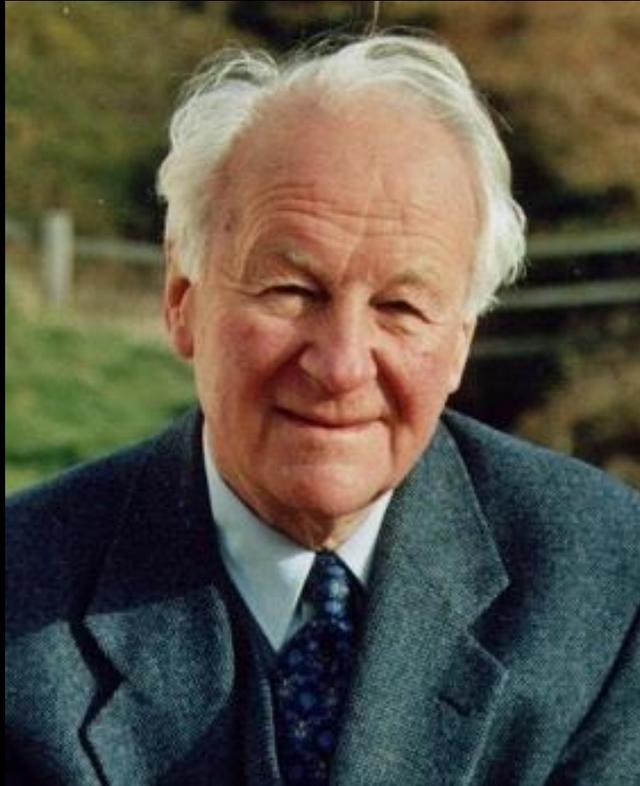
C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

### 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

#### A. Past Ministry     20:18-21

- 20:18 You ... know how I lived
- 20:20 teaching you in public and from house to house
- 20:21 repentance toward God and ... faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38



*Paul's threefold thoroughness was a fine example of 'evangelism in depth'. He shared all possible truth with all possible people in all possible ways. He taught the whole gospel to the whole city with his whole strength.*

*– John Stott (1921 – 2011),  
All Souls Church, London*

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

A. Past Ministry      20:18-21

B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

#### B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

- 20:23 the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.
- Like Jesus on his way to Jerusalem, Paul knew that he was not meant to live “happily ever after” – just yet.
- Resurrection can only happen after a death.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

#### B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

- 20:24 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
- If Paul could only finish the race, then that to him could be counted as complete success.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

#### B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

- 20:27 the whole counsel of God.
- Chuck Smith would often tell pastors that this phrase is an encouragement to teach the whole Bible.
- I personally cannot think of a better way to apply it.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

A. Past Ministry      20:18-21

B. Future Suffering      20:22-27

C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

## 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

### C. Present Encouragement     20:28-35

- 20:28     The word “flock” combines with “to care for” (“feed” KJV, “shepherd” NKJV) for pastoral imagery.
- Paul also calls them “overseers,” from which we get our word *bishop*.
- In 20:17 we saw that these were the elders.
- It makes sense to think of elders, pastors and overseers and being more or less synonyms.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

#### C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

- 20:28    the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
- Most versions seem to opt for this translation.
- An alternate way to say it is “the blood of his own.”
- Either way, it points to the deity of Christ.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

#### C. Present Encouragement      20:28-35

- 20:29    fierce wolves    Paul understood the very real danger of false teaching.
- The problems in some churches in Asia that we see in Revelation 2 – 3, show us that he was right.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

#### C. Present Encouragement     20:28-35

- 20:35     the words of the Lord Jesus, ... 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'
- This statement does not appear in the Gospels.
- It reveals that prior to the Gospels being written, the sayings of Jesus were known and taught.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

- 20:36-38      Paul's farewell closes out the chapter.
- This speech by Paul is the only message we have from in Acts him to a Christian audience.
- As in his letters, especially to Timothy and Titus, we see the personal and relational side of his ministry.

### 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

*I have heard people say that leaders should not get too close to those they lead for they will not be able to lead them properly because of their friendship ...*

*– Ajith Fernando,  
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



### 3. The Ephesian Elders     Acts 20:17-38

*... That may be the way secular organizations work, but it is alien to a Christian understanding of leadership.*

*– Ajith Fernando,  
Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka*



### 3. The Ephesian Elders      Acts 20:17-38

- I have heard the same philosophy of ministry expressed, but I personally agree with Fernando.
- There is an obvious place for public ministry as Paul carried out in Ephesus in the school of Tyrannus.
- There is also a more private personal side, which can be seen in friendships, small groups and in our homes.

# Acts 20    What We Just Read

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3. The Ephesian Elders    20:17-38

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<sup>26</sup> Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, <sup>27</sup> for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

# Acts 20    Key Points

## Acts 20    Key Points

1. Ministry is always a team effort.
2. We gather a team, share responsibilities and multiply the ministry – till Jesus comes!
3. Raising the dead does not happen often in the Bible, but it does happen.
4. This reminds us that we look forward to a bodily resurrection and a bodily life beyond the grave.

## Acts 20    Key Points

5. Paul carried out his ministry in Ephesus both publicly and from house to house
6. This reminds us that the life of the church ought to have different components, not just one.
7. Our culture tends to be more business and less personal, but encouragement is usually personal.

# Acts 20    A Prayer

# Acts 20    A Prayer

- Dear Heavenly Father,
- Thank you for the example of Paul and the team of people that he had around him in ministry.
- Let that remind us that we each serve in ministry full time, though we serve in different capacities.
- Help us also to develop close friendships while still remaining open to befriending the next person that you bring along.

# Acts 20    A Prayer

- Let us as a church have vibrant and effective public ministry while, at the same time, developing that closer more personal, more encouraging side in smaller groups and in our own homes.
- Finally, we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life you have planned for us in eternity.
- In Christ,
- Amen

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