

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 64 ACTS 20:7-25

ACTS 20:7-16 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: TROAS, AND THE RUSH TO JERUSALEM

- Verse 7 –
 - The phrase **the first day of the week** is literally, “the first of the sabbaths,” and refers to the counting of seven sabbaths from the first harvest (Dt. 16:9) to the day of Pentecost (see v. 16).
 - While in modern rabbinical Judaism this always starts the Sunday of Passover week, such was not the case under Biblical Judaism.
 - It is clear that this particular “counting of the Omer” began *after* the Feast of Unleavened bread was complete, because on this first of Sabbaths, **the disciples came together to break bread** (using the word for leavened bread).
 - Paul is on his way to Jerusalem for Pentecost, and is **ready to depart on the morrow**, and, having so much to cover, **continued his speech until midnight**.
- Verses 8-9 –
 - Even the best of people in the best of circumstances get sleepy!
 - Unfortunately, Eutychus was sleeping in the wrong place and was killed in the fall from the third story window.
- Verse 10 –
 - It is commonly understood that the boy was dead, but the previous verse simply says he was **taken up dead**, that is, picked up and thought and considered to be dead. In this verse, Paul says **his life is in him**.
 - While this *could have been* a miracle, the text itself does not prove such to be the case.
- Verses 11-12 –
 - Paul continued the study **even till break of day** and the congregation took great comfort in the well-being of the young man.
- Verses 13-16 –
 - These verses are mostly historical notes providing a bridge for the unfolding of the account of Paul’s ministry.
 - The verses recount the journey from Troas to Miletus, a journey rushed by Paul’s desire to **be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost**.
 - Pentecost was normally observed by merriment, consuming dairy products, and Torah study.

ACTS 20:17-38 | THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY: FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIANS

- Verses 17-20 –
 - Paul didn’t have enough time to go to Ephesus, but called for the Ephesian leaders to express his love and some final encouragements and exhortations.
- Verse 21 –
 - Paul ministered both publicly **and from house to house**. This gives indication (but does not require) that the elders (plural, v. 17) were “pastors” of individual house assemblies.
 - The most natural reading of the grammar, especially in the Greek, is that Paul testified to *two groups with two messages*.

- The **and** between **repentance** and **faith** carries the same significance as the one between **Jews** and **Greeks**.
 - Notice that repentance is **toward God** and faith is **toward our Lord Jesus Christ**, showing further evidence that repentance and faith were not presented as “inseparable experiences” (BF&M, 2000).
- Verses 22-23 –
 - It is a matter of interpretation whether Paul was **bound** in *his own spirit* (as in KJV) or in the Holy Spirit.
 - The likely answer is: *yes*.
 - The **Holy Ghost** (unquestionably the third person of the Trinity) gave Paul witness in **every city** that **bonds and afflictions abide me**.
 - The use of the word **abide** can mean “they remain,” or, by interpretation (but not translation), “they await.”
 - If the Holy Ghost was testifying that **bonds and afflictions** await Paul, then he was **bound in the Spirit** (upper case “S”).
 - If, however, the Holy Ghost simply told Paul, “it’s not over,” then he was bound in his own spirit (lower case “s”).
 - The KJV was wise in leaving this interpretive matter to the reader.
- Verse 24 –
 - When this is your “spirit,” then nothing can stop you, nor hinder your joy.
 - Paul notes that his ministry was **received of the Lord Jesus** (not passed down from Peter, nor the prophets, nor the “church,” etc.). Furthermore, this ministry was **to testify the gospel of the grace of God**. Living in the “Pauline” dispensation, we live in the “dispensation of the grace of God.”
- Verse 25 –
 - This verse provides some powerful insight.
 - Along the way, as Paul was in Ephesus, this study noted that Paul was teaching a Kingdom gospel rather than the **gospel of the grace of God** (v. 24).
 - For example, in Acts 19:7, Paul spends three months teaching **concerning the kingdom of God**.
 - Our note on Acts 19:10 says that “every clue from the text speaks of the Kingdom gospel,” and gives evidence that Paul is preaching about the Kingdom.
 - What we can conclude from verses 24 and 25 together is that Paul’s main ministry and charge was to teach the grace Gospel. However, since the Kingdom was still being offered, Paul also taught the kingdom.
 - Two errors have been made in this regard.
 - The evangelicals (based on covenant theology) have taught that the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of grace are the same thing. There is too much evidence to the contrary.
 - Others, like E.W. Bullinger, conclude that the gospel of grace was never preached until the gospel of the Kingdom ceased (because the kingdom was put into abeyance). The Bullinger position does not deal with verses 24 and 25 as together in historical context.