

Subject	Lessons from Acts Series	4420
		Acts 16
Title	7 Lessons from Acts 20.	
Proposition	To study Acts 20.	
Objective	To consider seven lessons which Acts 20 helps me to consider and appreciate and apply in my own life.	

7 Lessons from Acts 20

Introduction:

- 1. We must keep in mind as we read this chapter that Paul has a goal of making it to Jerusalem with the contribution for the poor saints of Judaea by Pentecost.**
- 2. We read about his visit to Troas and have apostolic example (v. 7) for observing the Lord's Supper each first day of the week.**
- 3. We read of the miraculous raising of Eutychus during that assembly in Troas.**
- 4. Paul determines to meet with the Ephesian elders but calls them to Miletus for the meeting.**
 - 1) He speaks to them of how he worked with them in Ephesus and he charges them to accept their responsibilities as elders and warns them about departures from the faith due to attacks from without and from within.**

2) There is a very emotional departure because all know that it will likely be the last time they see Paul.

5. OUTLINE:

1) Paul spends three months in Greece (1-3).

2) Paul leaves Philippi and meets companions at Troas (4-6).

3) A young man, having fallen asleep during Paul's preaching, and having fallen from the 3rd loft, is raised from the dead by Paul (7-12).

4) Paul and others come to Miletus (13-16).

5) Paul sends for the Ephesian elders (17).

6) Paul delivers a farewell charge to the Ephesian elders (18-35).

7) An emotional departing (36-38).

DISCUSSION: One LESSON from Acts 20—

I. UPROARs are to be expected as we serve the Lord (1).

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.

1. **UPROAR** is the word Luke chose to describe what had happened at Ephesus which he had recorded in the previous chapter.

- 1) The UPROAR took place as a result of Paul's plain preaching of the gospel of Christ.**
 - 2) It is obvious that in preaching the gospel Paul made it clear that DIANA is NOT the one people should be worshipping, but rather, the LORD GOD.**
 - 3) The uproar came from Demetrius and the other silversmiths who were profiting, financially, from the citizens bowing to Dianna.**
- 2. As in Ephesus, when people are confronted with the true gospel of Christ, there will be reactions.**
- 1) Some of those reactions could include violent opposition to the truth.**
 - 2) Those seeking for truth will love the truth and they will yield to it.**
 - 1- The result will be obedience to the gospel commands.**
 - 2- That will lead to eternal life for those who obey!**
 - 3- This is the wonderful reward for faithfully teaching God's word—a soul is diverted from eternal punishment!**
 - 3) Those who do not love the truth will have reactions against the truth.**
 - 1- Some of them could be violent.**

- 2- **If we are teaching the truth, we might be the targets of those who oppose the truth.**
- 3- **If such is the case, then we have an opportunity to have fellowship with the sufferings of our Lord, because they reacted violently to Him, as well.**
- 4) **Either way, it is our responsibility as Christians to present the truth in our way of life and our words.**
 - 1- **If that truth is appreciated, we are blessed.**
 - 2- **If that truth is NOT appreciated, we still are blessed for having done the Lord's will.**
3. **Christians certainly should have no fear of the consequences of spreading the message of salvation—2 Timothy 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.**
 - 1) **FEAR is something we have developed on our own.**
 - 2) **Furthermore, it is something we have developed unreasonably!**

One LESSON from Acts 20—

II. It provides an excellent opportunity to seek clearer understanding of BIBLE AUTHORITY (7).

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.

1. As I was studying this chapter, I consulted a volume I own on my computer: APOLOGETICS STUDY BIBLE.

1) I was interested to notice a box of information that was separated out, drawing special attention to Acts 20.7.

 **2) It names CHURCHES OF CHRIST and says:**

“Churches of Christ believe that this verse sets the pattern for partaking of the Lord’s Supper every Sunday.”

1- They have that statement correct.

2- However, they go on to seek to show we are wrong in our understanding of this passage.

3- They seek to use Acts 2.46 to disprove the position our brethren have defended so well down through the years.

1] Acts 2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

- 2] **The problem is that the passage used does NOT refer to the Lord's Supper, but to common meals Christians shared together.**
- 3] **Then, they jump to their conclusion that we cannot use Acts 20.7 to require weekly observance of the Lord's Supper.**

2. The matter at hand, then, is a need properly to ascertain Bible authority—HOW DOES THE BIBLE AUTHORIZE.

- 1) **The Bible authorizes by DIRECT STATEMENT, by APPROVED ACCOUNTS OF ACTION, and by IMPLICATION.**
- 2) **Here is an instance of the Bible authorizing the command to observe the Lord's Supper (Mt 26.26-29; 1 Cor 11.23-29), by means of AN APPROVED ACCOUNT OF ACTION.**
- 3) **If the early church assembled on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20.7), then you and I must do likewise.**
- 4) **We are doing right when we take the Lord's Supper EACH and EVERY first day of the week, and we DO NOT RIGHT when we follow some man's opinion of when to do it.**

3. I love what brother J.W. McGarvey wrote about this matter:

- 1) It is very generally admitted, even among parties who do not observe the practice themselves, that the apostolic Churches broke the loaf weekly; but it is still made a question whether, in the absence of an express commandment, this example is binding upon us.
- 2) This question is likely to be determined differently by two different classes of men.
 - 1- Those who are disposed to follow chiefly the guide of their own judgment, or of their denominational customs, will feel little influenced by such a precedent.
 - 2- But to those who are determined that the very slightest indication of the divine will shall govern them, the question must present itself in this way:
- 3) We are commanded to do this in memory of Jesus.
 - 1- We are not told, in definite terms, how often it shall be done;
 - 2- But we find that the apostles established the custom of meeting every Lord's day for this purpose.
 - 3- This is an inspired precedent, and with it we must comply.

- 4- We can come to no other conclusion without assuming an ability to judge of this matter with more wisdom than did the apostle.
4. To that last statement, we would only add that THE APOSTLE, Paul in this case, was GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH by the Holy Spirit (John 16.13).
- 1) The church of the first century had the direct guidance of certain men, APOSTLES, who were themselves guided by the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) How can we go wrong by following the examples they set before us???
5. Much more could be said here about this hermeneutical question, but we will save that for another occasion.

One LESSON from Acts 20—

III. A Strong Example of Someone MAKING UP THEIR MIND on something because of its VALUE to others (16).

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.

1. **Sometimes people have a really hard time of making up their minds—shall I do this, or shall I do that.**

- 1) **May I suggest that it is highly in order for you and me, as Christians, to make up our minds about something?**
 - 2) **If we are to please the Lord, we simply have to make up our minds that we are going to serve the Lord faithfully and follow His will for us presented in Scripture (Mt 6.33)!**
 - 3) **And, the fact is, if we do this, our lives will inevitably affect positively on the lives of others who surround us!**
2. **Paul DETERMINED to make it to Jerusalem at a certain time.**
- 1) **DETERMINED, here simply means Paul had made up his mind to do everything possible to get to Jerusalem at least by the Day of Pentecost.**
 - 2) **There were obstacles he had to overcome to meet that goal.**
 - 1- **There is no doubt in my mind that he would have loved to take it a little slower and spend some time with the brethren at Ephesus.**
 - 2- **That would have pleased both them and Paul.**
 - 3) **Another major obstacle is presented in verses 22-23... Acts 20:22-23 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the**

things that shall befall me there: (23) Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

- 1- **There is always a lot of discussion about the phrase: BOUND IN THE SPIRIT.**
 - 1] **Is the meaning: Paul's determined spirit?—KJV, ASV (spirit).**
 - 2] **Is the meaning: "CONSTRAINED, COMPELLED, BOUND by the Holy Spirit"?—ESV, NET, NASB (capitalized).**
 - 3] **Wayne Jackson thinks HOLY SPIRIT, but I think Paul's determined spirit would be the better answer.**
 - 4] **The normal way Luke would have written a double reference to the Holy Spirit in close proximity would be to write the fuller name first and the shorter second. [Gundry].**
 - 5] **Here, we have the shortened form first and the longer second in verse 23.**
- 4) **So then, this other obstacle to making it to Jerusalem has two parts:**
 - 1- **He does not know exactly what might happen when he gets to Jerusalem—**

after, he has been making converts of Jews everywhere he went—many Jews want him dead.

2- He has been receiving, and continues to receive, warnings that trouble awaits his arrival in Jerusalem—At Tyre... Acts

21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, **that he should not go up to Jerusalem.**

1] Some try to say that Paul was disobedient to the Holy Spirit by going to Jerusalem.

2] Rather I take it that these brethren at Tyre were simply concerned for Paul's safety and were trying to persuade him to delay his trip to Jerusalem for his own physical safety.

3] How do we so conclude: It is quite obvious that the Lord was well pleased with what Paul did in Jerusalem—Acts 23:11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, **Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in**

Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

3. So then, we must ask—WHAT CAUSED PAUL TO HAVE SUCH DETERMINATION?

- 1) Certainly Paul knew the kinds of crowds that would be in Jerusalem for Pentecost—To Paul, LARGE CROWDS, meant a tremendous opportunity to speak up for Christ and present the gospel.**
- 2) Not only so, but there would likely be many brethren from Judean cities, there at this time, to whom Paul could relay the funds he had collected from mainly Gentile churches.**
 - 1- Paul knew of the tension that existed between Christians of Jewish background and those with Gentile background.**
 - 2- He seemed to be deeply concerned about that division and hoped that this distribution of funds to needy Jewish brethren would AID in overcoming that division.**
 - 3- I believe that was a very strong motivation for Paul to be at Jerusalem before that certain day—PENTECOST DAY.**

One LESSON from Acts 20—

IV. Paul's wise evaluation of temporal versus eternal (23).

Acts 20:23 ~~Save that~~ the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

- 1. Every indication that Paul had on which to base a decision about travel to Jerusalem was in the NEGATIVE—don't go.**
- 2. It would be dangerous for Paul.**
- 3. Yet, his decision was TO GO.**
- 4. The only way to explain this is that Paul was convinced that there would be great value in the matter of saving souls for him to go.**
- 5. YES, he would be endangering his physical life to go.**
- 6. Yet, his decision was TO GO.**
- 7. Here is a clue to Paul's thinking: Romans 10:13-15** For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

8. Paul had his mind made up about the RELATIVE value of temporal physical life and eternal life.

One LESSON from Acts 20—

V. Paul's idea of PURITY matches Ezekiel 33 (26).

Acts 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

- 1. Paul was a man of THE BOOK.**
- 2. Paul knew the Old Testament Scriptures, in addition to being inspired of the Holy Spirit.**
- 3. It seems quite likely that his statement on this solemn occasion was influenced by the writing of Ezekiel.**
- 4. Ezekiel 33:1-6** Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, (2) Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: (3) If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; (4) Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. (5) He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his

blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. (6) But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.

5. **Paul felt the weight of that responsibility upon his shoulders as he served the Lord Jesus as an apostle.**
6. **Today, the Lord has placed elders in the position of WATCHMEN for the souls of local churches.**
7. **How serious a matter it is to fulfill that awesome responsibility!**

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One LESSON from Acts 20—

VI. Paul's WARNING to Elders (28).

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.

- 1. Elders have such vitally important responsibilities.**
- 2. Paul summarizes those responsibilities into THREE CATEGORIES.**
 - 1) Examine self.**
 - 2) Oversee the flock.**
 - 3) Feed the flock.**
- 3. The reason Paul warned these elders in this way is that the souls they are Bishops over are precious to the Lord.**
- 4. No man can help others spiritually unless he is SERIOUS about his own conduct!**
- 5. Paul here affirms that elders or bishops are appointed by the Spirit.**
 - 1) 1 Timothy 3.1-7 and Titus 1.5-9 give the Holy Spirit-inspired qualifications.**
 - 2) Those who meet such qualifications, and are selected by the local church, thus can be said to be appointed by the Spirit.**

6. To be given that role by the Holy Spirit ought to be respected by the man selected and by those who are the beneficiaries of their leadership.

One LESSON from Acts 20—

VII. What Paul said to MEN HE LOVED (32).

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.

- 1. Paul knew these men and had shared many hours with them as they cared for and shepherded the church at Ephesus.**
- 2. It is obvious from the last verses of this chapter how strong their feelings of love for each other were—**
Acts 20:36-38 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. (37) And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him, (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.
- 3. If you study the word COMMEND, what Paul was doing was entrusting these elders to the care of God and of His Word.**

4. There is no better way Paul could have expressed his love for these men than to have made that statement. *Following the word of God includes TWO*

REWARDS:

- 1) One is BEING BUILT UP by it.**
- 2) One who follows it will have an eternal inheritance.**

Conclusion:

- 1. So many other things could and should be said about Acts 20.**
- 2. What a great an encouraging and helpful part of God's revelation to man!**