

Week 31: Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey
Oct 7th 2023

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Background:

The previous 2 weeks have been slightly out of sync "for literary and planning reasons".

Luke ends Paul's 2nd missionary journey very abruptly in Acts 18:22 with Paul's return to Antioch, his visit to Jerusalem and seemingly immediate return to Antioch. Then "after some time", Luke informs his readers, Paul leaves Antioch and heads off again to commence his 3rd missionary journey. On the outward leg he does not call in at Ephesus on his westward journey – hence in VV we treated Acts 19 as a separate unit. Acts 19, however, does provide potentially useful background information regarding both the letter to the Ephesians and his asking to meet with the elders of the church in Ephesus on his return leg to Antioch and then Jerusalem.

This week we will follow his 3rd missionary journey (rather rapidly) and note some of the issues that Luke raises in Acts 20 before finally trespassing very briefly into Acts 21 to note the conclusion of this journey.

Scripture:

Please read Acts 18:18-23; 19:1, 21-22; 20:1-21:3; Romans 15:18-26; 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:8; 2 Tim 4:10;

Resources:

Illyricum: see <https://www.britannica.com/place/Illyria#ref87154>

Questions for discussion:

1. Why might Paul NOT have written to the believers in the churches in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch/A?
2. Pauls stays in Troas for a week. Why does Luke mention "*meeting to break bread on the first day of the week*"? (Acts 20:7)
3. Paul stays in Troas for a week - maybe through choice, or perhaps because of boat unloading/loading or connections. Why do you think Luke includes the story of Eutychus?
4. Paul asked the church elders to come from Ephesus to meet him at Miletus. What is/are the main point(s) of their meeting. How do you think the elders responded to what Paul was saying?
5. Does Acts 20:25-28 imply that Paul is "washing his hands" of the church in Ephesus/Asia? Why/Why not?
6. Williams¹ states that "We are under a divine necessity to work hard in the interest of others – or so the word must seems to imply". If he is correct, how might we apply Acts 20: 34-35 to ourselves individually?

¹ New International Biblical Commentary. Acts. D.J.Williams. Hendrickson. 1990. P.357.