

# Acts 20 notes

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All passages from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

Paul's third journey through Asia (modern Turkey), Macedonia and Greece continued. After being run out of Ephesus, Paul traveled to Greece through Macedonia. He planned to sail from Greece to Syria, but the discovery of plot on his life prompted a return tour through Macedonia and western Asia (modern Turkey). During the journey, Paul's prolific preaching made Eutychus "fall asleep in the LORD" literally and euphemistically, but Paul resurrected him. In another city, Paul confided to the elders of Ephesus that he was "innocent of the blood of all men" by fearlessly proclaiming the good news about God's mercy for Jew and non-Jew through Messiah Yeshua, yet the Spirit was telling him continually that part of completing his task involved "facing the music" in Yerushalayim.

This chapter also includes a number of references to "Jewish observances" that Paul continued to observe now some three decades after his conversion to belief in Yeshua, and Lukas also makes note of these references. These include delay of travel until after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, an expectation of being in Yerushalayim for Shavu'ot (Pentecost) and an assembly of believers that seems to have been a *havdalah* service, a tradition to "separate" the Sabbath from the new week.

## Ephesus to Greece through Macedonia then back to Asia (1–6)

"We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread" (Acts 20:6)

- This is after Aviv 21, the last day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.<sup>1</sup>
- five days from Phillipi to Troas then seven days in Troas => on the one of the Shabbat
- i.e. at least 14 days after Unleavened Bread or into the second month

## In Troas: Paul preaches after midnight, teaches 'til the dawn; Eutychus literally falls asleep in the LORD, and Paul resurrects him (7–12)

- Did this happen on Saturday night or Sunday night?

"On the first [day] of the week[s], 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. There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together." (Acts 20:7–8)

- Adam Clarke on "upon the first day of the week": "What was called κυριακη, the Lord's day, the Christian Sabbath, in which they commemorated the resurrection of our Lord; and which, among all Christians, afterwards took the place of the Jewish Sabbath."<sup>2</sup>
- Ἐν δὲ τῇ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων *en de te mia toun sabbatoun* is translated as "on the first/one [day] of the sabbath/sabbaths."
  - The other uses in the Apostolic Scriptures are Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, all referring to the resurrection of Yeshua.
  - This refers to the first day of the week, because:
    1. σαββάτων *sabbatoun* is used as a singular or plural in Greek, e.g. ἡμέραν τῶν σαββάτων *hemeran toun sabbatoun* "remember the Sabbath day" (Ex. 20:8 LXX) and "ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία" *epi sabbata tria* "on three Sabbaths" (Acts 17:2).<sup>3</sup>
    2. *Didache*, a late first century or early second century writing by a Jewish-Christian, noted that, "Judeans fast δευτέρῳ σαββάτων καὶ πέμπτῃ 'on the second and fifth

1. See Leviticus 23.

2. Clarke, Adam. *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Public domain, 1803. Derived from an electronic text from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library <[www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)>.

days of the week' (Monday and Thursday)." <sup>4</sup> So "first of the Shabbat," "second of the Shabbat," "fifth of the Shabbat," etc. referred to days of the week.

- Jews observe a day from sunset to sunset, per Genesis 1, so this event would have to have been on the beginning evening of the first day of the week and not what is called Sunday night, or the beginning of the second day of the week.
- Jews observe the beginning of the Shabbat with an *Erev Shabbat* ceremony and the end of the Shabbat with a *havdalah* ceremony.
- The name *Eutychus* means "good fortune,"<sup>5</sup> or "lucky."
- "But Paul went down and fell upon him, and after embracing him ..." (Acts 20:10)
- "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." (Acts 20:10).
  - The Greek word θορυβέω (*thorubeo*?, Strong's 2350) translated "troubled" can mean "to make a noise or uproar, be turbulent" in Thayer's lexicon<sup>6</sup> or "to cause emotional disturbance, disturb, agitate" in the BDAG lexicon.<sup>7</sup>
    - *Trouble* in English comes from Latin *turbidus*, or "a crowd, a disturbance." *Turbid* in English comes from the same Latin root and is used for a color or liquid that is "murky, not clear."<sup>8</sup>
    - The opposition to Paul in Ephesus also had whipped up θορυβέω (Acts 20:1).
- The phrase "greatly comforted" (Acts 20:12) could be translated "not moderately comforted."<sup>9</sup>

## In west Asia: From Troas to Miletus (13–16)

"he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16)

- This is another example of how Paul observed — ordered his life around — the appointed times of the LORD. Paul did not teach contrary to Yeshua's statement that His mission would not change God's words (Matt. 5:17–20) but rather bring them to completeness and confirm God's prophecy.

## Message for the elders of Ephesus (17–38)

- Paul summarized core reasons for his journeys: "solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Iesous [Christos]" (Acts 20:21) and "the ministry which I received from the Lord Iesous, to testify solemnly of the [good] news of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), "preaching the kingdom" (Acts 20:25) and "declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27).
  - Repentance: The baptism of Yokhanan.
  - Faith in Yeshua: The baptism of the Spirit.
- The apostle Yokhanan two or three decades later received this message for Ephesus:

"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this: 'I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; and you have perseverance and have endured for My name's sake, and have not grown weary. But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent. Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'" (Rev. 2:1–7)

3. Danker, Fredrick W., ed. "σαββάτων." *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Third Edition (BDAG)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. σάββατα is the plural contextually grammatical form of σαββάτων in this usage.

4. *Ibid.* Citing *Didache* 8:1.

5. Thomas, Robert L., ed. *Greek Dictionary of the New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*. La Habra: Lockman Foundation, 1981. Εὐτυχός (*Eutuchus*, Strong's 2161) comes from from εὖς (*eus*, "good or well," 2095) and τυχή (*tuhe*, "fortune").

6. Thayer, Joseph H. "θορυβέω." *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Public domain.

7. BDAG. "θορυβέω."

8. "Trouble" and "turbid." *New Oxford American Dictionary*.

9. New American Standard Bible margin note for παρεκλήθησαν οὐ μετρίως *pareklesan ou metrios*.

- This abandonment of their “first agape” could reflect a departure from actively building each other up in faith and eschewing divisions between Jew and non-Jew.
- In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul is in prison (Eph. 1:1; 3:1; 4:1; 6:20), likely during the his fourth and last journey, and is exhorting the congregation to build each other up in faith in Messiah and to avoid division between Jew and non-Jew, all showing the world that God was behind this transformation of character.<sup>10</sup>
- Paul’s message for the elders of Ephesus was a somber discourse, as Paul revealed that the Spirit was calling him to Yerushalayim and that he would face “bonds and afflictions” there (Acts 20:22–25).
  - Yet, Paul trusted that God would keep him alive long enough to complete the task appointed him (Acts 20:24).
  - What task has God appointed for you? If you don’t know, are you earnestly asking Him to reveal it to you? How are you living your life according to that appointment?

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10. McKee, J.K. "Ephesians." *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic*. Kissimmee, Fla.: TNN Press: 2006.