

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## LESSON 24: CHAPTER 20

13 November 2015

**Vs. 13** Paul decided to go about 20 miles by foot to the next location and meet up with his companions there. It seems that Paul was in need of some alone time with the Lord.

**Vss. 14-17** Notice Luke is with the group now: **“We took him in.”** --Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost (good witnessing opportunity) and didn't have time to make the trip to Ephesus, but he wanted to see the Ephesian elders. So he asked them to come to Miletus.

Notice that elders now have full responsibility of the care of the churches. In the beginning it was the Apostles (Acts 6:2), then it moved to the Apostles WITH the elders (Acts 15:6). And now it is solely the elders (Acts 20:17) and remains that way today.

### PAUL'S FAREWELL MESSAGE/ THE EXAMPLE OF HIS LIFE FOR US TO FOLLOW

1. Paul was consistent (vs. 18); he had learned to be content in every situation (Eph. 4:11), which enabled him to continue the work no matter what circumstances he faced, good or bad.

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2. Paul was humble (vs. 19). Paul was a well-known, highly respected man, but he didn't let that change him. He always kept in mind that God is great, while he counted himself as the chief sinner (1 Tim. 1:15).

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3. Paul had a soft and tender heart (vs. 19).

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4. Paul didn't quit when things got difficult (vs 19). The Jews were a consistent threat, but he didn't quit.

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5. Paul didn't practice “selective preaching” (vs. 20). He declared ALL the counsel of God (vs. 27). Many preachers avoid “negative preaching” to attract more people. A biblical preacher will not neglect any part of the Bible in his sermons (Old and New Testament: see Acts 24:14 and 26:22, 2 Tim. 3:16).

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6. Paul taught “publicly, and from house to house” (vs. 20). Ministry involves publicly proclaiming the gospel as well as sitting down with individuals and families privately.

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7. Paul had a consistent testimony (vs. 21). His message didn't change according to the varying audiences. He preached “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” He didn't avoid preaching the command for repentance in order to make more friends and attract more crowds.

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8. Paul lost his life and found it (vs. 24, Matt. 16:25). He gave up his life for Christ and found out that his new life IN Christ was so much BETTER than that old world and the things of the flesh. Consequently, the Lord took care of him all through his travels; through perils and persecutions (2 Cor. 11:24).

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9. Paul enjoyed the Christian life (vs. 22). He didn't dread serving the Lord; it wasn't a burden to him. He didn't count it as a sacrifice.

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10. Paul was pure from the blood of all men (vs. 25). Everywhere Paul went, he made sure that all the people there knew what to do to be saved. (See Ezekiel 3:18).
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#### WARNINGS:

**Vss. 27-28** Paul warned the elders to make sure their own life was right first (blameless, good testimony, right living) before they'd be able to take care of their flock. (See 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9).

There are two grand truths in verse 28. 1) Jesus Christ is God. 2) God is a trinity. God purchased the church with "His own blood." It was Jesus' blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. That was God's "own blood." (See 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

God purchased the church. It's God's church, not man's. Men have the oversight of God's church.

#### ATTACKS ON THE DEITY OF CHRIST:

**ASV:** "to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood."

**Jehovah's Witness New World Translation:** "shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own [Son]."

**The Good News Bible:** "Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the sacrificial death of his Son."

**Vss. 29-30** Paul warns that after he's gone, some "**grievous wolves**" will enter the church and try and destroy the flock. Not only that, but men will arise from among the elders IN the church—who will speak "**perverse things, to draw disciples after THEM.**" (It will be THEIR church, not God's).

#### PAUL'S EXAMPLE (Continued)

11. Paul constantly warned believers about things that would ruin the church (vs. 31). He gave the warnings daily whether they needed it or not. Ministers ought to follow his example, but they don't.

**Vs. 32** Notice the order in this verse. You've got to have a relationship with God before "**the word of his grace**" can "**build you up.**" Bible knowledge will make you heady and high minded (2 Tim. 3:4) and puffed up (1 Cor. 8:1) if you don't know God.

12. Paul wasn't in the ministry for the money (vs. 33). Paul could minister to all kinds of people (rich or poor) without coveting the things they possessed and without hinting about his physical needs (see Phil. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:8). Remember; what you seem to lack in this life (for the Lord's sake), you'll be rewarded for it in the next life.

13. Paul worked to earn wages to provide for his and his companions' necessities (vs. 34). Any man who is unwilling to preach unless he is paid, shouldn't be in the ministry. A minister should be willing to do whatever it takes to get the gospel out.

14. Paul showed these elders how to give to the needs of others (vs. 35). Jesus SAID "**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**" Paul didn't say it was written down anywhere in the gospels (see John 21:25).

**Vss. 36-38** Closing prayer and farewell.