

TRAVEL PLANS: CASE STUDIES IN DECISION MAKING

Acts 19:22-24; 20:1-6

OUTLINE OF ACTS

Introduction: The Establishment of the Witness (The Creation of the Church) (Acts 1-2)

Part I: The Witness to the *Jewish* World [PETER prominent] (Acts 3-12)

- A. The Expansion of the Church at **Jerusalem** (3:1-6:7)
- B. The Witness in **All Judea and Samaria** (6:7-9:31)
- C. Initial Extension of the Gospel to Gentiles (9:32-12:25)

Part II: The Witness to the **Ends of the (Gentile) Earth** [PAUL Prominent] (Acts 13-28)

- A. The Extension of the Gospel in Asia Minor [Missionary Journeys 1 & 2] (13:1-16:5)
- B. The Extension of the Gospel in the Aegean Area [Third Missionary Journey] (16:6-19:20)**
- C. The Extension of the Gospel to Rome [Fourth Missionary Journey] (19:21-28:31)

I. Touring With (and Without) Paul

A. Luke's Summary of Paul's Travels

1. Paul's Itinerary (19:22): Ephesus → Macedonia → Greece (Corinth) → _____ → _____
2. Paul's advance team (19:23): Timothy and Erastus
3. The beginning of Paul's "Final" Journey (20:1-7)
 - a. Traveling West: A ministry of _____ in the "regions" of Macedonia (20:1-2) and three months in Corinth (20:2-3)
 - b. Traveling East:
 - Plan A: Sail from Cenchreae on a pilgrim ship bound for Syria (ultimately, Jerusalem)
 - Plan B: Because of a plot against Paul, he sent some of his team on the ship. But he walked to Philippi from which he and Luke sailed to Troas where he rejoined the tour.
 - c. Paul's traveling companions:
 - Sopater (Berea)
 - Aristarchus and Secundus (Thessalonica)
 - Gaius (Derbe)
 - Timothy (Lystra)
 - Tychicus and Trophimus (Asia/Ephesus)
 - Luke (Philippi)

B. The "Rest of the Story"

1. When Paul sent Timothy and Erastus to Corinth (Acts 19:23), he had Timothy deliver an extended letter from Paul, 1 Corinthians, which addressed problems of division, sexual immorality, and social snobbery, and answered questions submitted by the Corinthians to Paul. He also gave directions for the collection of a special offering for the beleaguered saints in Judea (1 Cor. 16:1-10).

2. In the meantime, opponents of Paul had infiltrated the Corinthian church, leading many astray. Timothy encountered a church in great disarray and subsequently reported this to Paul. Paul made a hasty visit to Corinth to try to resolve matters, but he was rebuffed. Returning to Ephesus, he wrote a "tearful" letter seeking repentance, which he sent by the hand of Titus (2 Cor. 1:15-16, 23-2:4; 7:8-9)
3. When Titus had had enough time to get to Corinth, Paul set out overland for Macedonia (Acts 20:1), intending to rendezvous with Titus in Troas (2 Cor. 2:12-13). When Titus failed to show up, Paul, in great anxiety (2 Cor. 7:5-6a), set out for Macedonia in hopes of intersecting with Titus en route.
4. God ministered to Paul 1) by letting him find Titus (likely in Philippi) (2 Cor. 7:6); 2) by the good news of the repentant response of (most of) the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 7:7-13); and 3) by clarifying and reviewing the grace-empowered nature of new covenant ministry (2 Cor. 2:14-5:21).
5. Relieved that the Corinthian church had apparently survived a major crisis, Paul stayed for a time in the region of Macedonia expanding the reach of the gospel (Rom. 15:19). While there, he wrote 2 Corinthians, part of which was devoted to completing the collection of the offering (chaps 8-9).
6. Completing his work in Macedonia, Paul came to Corinth where he spent three months, during which he wrote the letter to the Romans (Rom. 16:1-2, 23; 1 Cor. 1:14). Along with his most complete explication of the gospel, Paul shared his travel plans and explained the Judean offering project (1:8-15; 15:17-29). Accordingly, the travel companions identified by Luke (Acts 20:4-5) were official representatives of the churches that had contributed to the special offering.

II. Lessons for 21st Century Disciples

A. Responding to discouragement in ministry: the nature of New Covenant Ministry (2 Cor. 2-3)

1. _____ through Christ (2 Cor. 2:14-16; 3:4)
2. _____ from God (2 Cor. 3:5-6)
3. _____ by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18)
4. _____ by Christ (2 Cor. 3:1-3)
5. _____ from me (2 Cor. 3:5)

B. Responding to "open doors" of opportunity (1 Cor. 16:8-9; 2 Cor. 2:12-13).

1. The term "door" is figurative, referring to an _____, usually related to effective ministry.
2. Opportunities, like everything else, come through God's _____.
3. Most of the time, open doors should be _____ as part of wise, resourceful living for the Lord (Eph. 5:15-16).
4. If a greater opportunity or more pressing work is at hand, it is proper to _____ an open door.
5. An "open door" is not a providential _____ from God.

C. Steps in long-range planning illustrated by Paul (Romans 1, 15).

1. _____: Paul adopted spiritual goals that were based on God's moral will (1:11-13; 15:20).
2. _____: Since he did not know how much time he had, he arranged his goals into wise priorities, determining what should be done first, second, third, etc. (15:23-28).
3. _____: Next, he devised plans that gave him a strategy for accomplishing his purposes (1:13; 15:23-28).
4. _____: Through prayer, he submitted himself and his plans to the sovereign will of God (1:8-10).
5. _____: When providentially hindered from accomplishing his plans, he assumed that the delay was God's sovereign will. This conviction freed him from discouragement. Since his plans were sound, the only thing he adjusted was the timetable (1:10, 13; 15:22-24).
6. _____: Paul explained his decisions on the basis of God's moral will and his own personal application of wisdom (1:8-13; 15:20-29).