

## Three Months with the Spirit Bible Study on The Acts of the Apostles

**20** <sup>1</sup>After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia. <sup>2</sup>When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much encouragement, he came to Greece, <sup>3</sup>where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews, and so he decided to return through Macedonia. <sup>4</sup>He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. <sup>5</sup>They went ahead and were waiting for us in Troas; <sup>6</sup>but we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

<sup>7</sup>On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. <sup>8</sup>There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. <sup>9</sup>A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the ground three floors below and was picked up dead. <sup>10</sup>But Paul went down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, 'Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him.' <sup>11</sup>Then Paul went upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. <sup>12</sup>Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.

<sup>13</sup>We went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul on board there; for he had made this arrangement, intending to go by land himself. <sup>14</sup>When he met us in Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. <sup>15</sup>We sailed from there, and on the following day we arrived opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos, and the day after that we came to Miletus. <sup>16</sup>For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

<sup>17</sup>From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the church to meet him. <sup>18</sup>When they came to him, he said to them:

'You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, <sup>19</sup>serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. <sup>20</sup>I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to house, <sup>21</sup>as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance towards God and faith

towards our Lord Jesus. <sup>22</sup>And now, as a captive to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, <sup>23</sup>except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. <sup>24</sup>But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God's grace.

<sup>25</sup>And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. <sup>26</sup>Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the blood of any of you, <sup>27</sup>for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. <sup>28</sup>Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. <sup>29</sup>I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. <sup>30</sup>Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. <sup>31</sup>Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. <sup>32</sup>And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified. <sup>33</sup>I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. <sup>34</sup>You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. <sup>35</sup>In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

<sup>36</sup>When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. <sup>37</sup>There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, <sup>38</sup>grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

## 21

<sup>1</sup>When we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. <sup>2</sup>When we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, we went on board and set sail. <sup>3</sup>We came in sight of Cyprus; and leaving it on our left, we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. <sup>4</sup>We looked up the disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup>When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. There we knelt down on the beach and prayed <sup>6</sup>and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

<sup>7</sup>When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we greeted the believers and stayed with them for one day. <sup>8</sup>The next day we left and came to

Caesarea; and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, and stayed with him. <sup>9</sup>He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. <sup>10</sup>While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, "This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles."' <sup>12</sup>When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' <sup>14</sup>Since he would not be persuaded, we remained silent except to say, 'The Lord's will be done.'

<sup>15</sup>After these days we got ready and started to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup>Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came along and brought us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to stay.

<sup>17</sup>When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us warmly. <sup>18</sup>The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup>After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. <sup>20</sup>When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, 'You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. <sup>21</sup>They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. <sup>22</sup>What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. <sup>23</sup>So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. <sup>24</sup>Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law. <sup>25</sup>But as for the Gentiles who have become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgement that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.' <sup>26</sup>Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

<sup>27</sup>When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, <sup>28</sup>shouting, 'Fellow-Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.' <sup>29</sup>For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. <sup>30</sup>Then all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple,

and immediately the doors were shut. <sup>31</sup>While they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. <sup>32</sup>Immediately he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. <sup>33</sup>Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; he inquired who he was and what he had done. <sup>34</sup>Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. <sup>35</sup>When Paul came to the steps, the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. <sup>36</sup>The crowd that followed kept shouting, 'Away with him!'

<sup>37</sup>Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, 'May I say something to you?' The tribune replied, 'Do you know Greek?' <sup>38</sup>Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?' <sup>39</sup>Paul replied, 'I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people.' <sup>40</sup>When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

<sup>22</sup>'Brothers and fathers, listen to the defence that I now make before you.'

<sup>2</sup>When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then he said:

<sup>3</sup> 'I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. <sup>4</sup>I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, <sup>5</sup>as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

<sup>6</sup> 'While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. <sup>7</sup>I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" <sup>8</sup>I answered, "Who are you, Lord?" Then he said to me, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." <sup>9</sup>Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup>I asked, "What am I to do, Lord?" The Lord said to me, "Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do." <sup>11</sup>Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

<sup>12</sup>'A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, <sup>13</sup>came to me; and standing beside me, he said, "Brother Saul, regain your sight!" In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him.

<sup>14</sup>Then he said, “The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; <sup>15</sup>for you will be his witness to all the world of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup>And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.” <sup>17</sup>‘After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup>and saw Jesus saying to me, “Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.” <sup>19</sup>And I said, “Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. <sup>20</sup>And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.” <sup>21</sup>Then he said to me, “Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.”’

**22** <sup>1</sup>Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, ‘Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.’ <sup>23</sup>And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air, <sup>24</sup>the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by flogging, to find out the reason for this outcry against him.