

Paul Raises the Dead! Solemn Farewell and Forewarning

V 1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to himself, embraced them, and departed to go to Macedonia.

“After the uproar. . . to Macedonia.” There was not much other choice now but for Paul to leave Ephesus; this was in 55 A.D. This time he had a better reason to leave than on the previous occasion when he went to fulfill his vow in Jerusalem (18:21). Although Paul was on his way now to Macedonia, this was only a stopover in his long-term plan *“to go to Jerusalem”*, and he looked even further ahead: *“After I have been there, I must also see Rome”* (19:21.)

V 2-3 Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece

and stayed three months. And when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia.

In Macedonia were the new groups of believers in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, established a few years earlier. (Acts 16:10-17:15) Paul and team went there again to strengthen them in the faith with *“many words”* (*“much exhortation”* in KJV). This journey may have included a side trip to *“Illyricum”* north of Macedonia (now the modern nations of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina). According to Romans 15:19, Paul did go there, and this may have been the time when that happened.

About this time Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians. Then, after spending the summer and fall in Macedonia (1Corinthians 16:5-8), Paul and team *“came into Greece”*; that is, he left the Greek mainland of Macedonia and went south, most likely to Corinth.

“Three months.” The winter of 56-57 A.D. (1Cor 16:6) Not a long time because *“the Jews plotted against him.”* The Jews probably still hated Paul because of their humiliating defeat before Gallio a few years earlier and for his success in converting two of their prominent leaders, Crispus and Sosthenes.

“About to sail to Syria.” On the small ships of Jewish pilgrims going for the Passover Feast, it would have been easy for Paul’s enemies to murder him and get away with it. So Paul felt it best to abandon that more direct route, and instead, *“he decided to return through Macedonia”* via the land route; from there he would go

by ship across the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor, then catch another ship from there to Jerusalem. The longer journey meant he would miss Passover but would still get there in time for the Pentecost feast, which it seems he was intent on doing, judging by what verse 16 says: *“he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.”*

V 4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia - also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

The seven men mentioned here were leaders or representatives of different churches - of Berea, Thessalonica, Derbe, Asia. Why such a large delegation accompanied Paul is not clear. He may have needed them for the sake of protection, because of the Jews and because of the fact he was carrying a large sum of money for the Jerusalem church. Or he may have wanted to bring these representatives of far-flung churches with him as a way of establishing unity between them and the Jerusalem church.

V 5 These men, going ahead, waited for us at Troas.

“Waited for us.” The first person *“us”* shows that Luke, the probable author of the Book of Acts, had re-joined Paul’s team after an absence of about six years. As a Gentile, Luke was able to stay in Philippi after Paul and Silas had been driven out because of their Jewish nationality. (16:20,39,40) The seven other brethren (Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timotheus, Tychicus, Trophimus) went to Troas first and waited there for Paul and Luke. We don’t know exactly what transpired, but it is quite possible that Luke used this time with Paul to gather and compile the records of Paul’s exploits over the last few years.

V 6 But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

“We sailed away from Philippi.” After a year’s time in Greece, Paul left from Philippi - most likely in April, 57 A.D.

“After the Days of Unleavened Bread.” That meant the Passover feast had already finished, and time was running out for Paul if he was going to make it for the Pentecost feast. The journey to Troas took *“five days”* - longer than usual - perhaps because of bad weather.

V 7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

“On the first day of the week.” The disciples liked to get together on *“the first day of the week”*, which was Sunday, the day of Christ’s resurrection - a custom that has continued right into the present day.

“Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” In those days before electricity, that was fairly late. People rose at sunrise and went to bed not too long after sunset. It seems Paul, urgently wanting to get on with his journey and figuring he had only this one opportunity to minister to the believers here, was trying to make the most of it with his lengthy talk.

V 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together.

“Many lamps.” The fumes from these oil-burning lamps may have created a drowsy atmosphere. *“Upper room.”* They met in people’s homes. Not until the 3rd Century did church-building construction begin.

V 9-10 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.

But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.”

“Young man.” The Greek word (in verse 12) suggests he was between 7 and 14 years. His youth, the fumes, and the late hour caused him to doze off, fall three stories, and get killed (*“was taken up dead”*). Then Paul said, *“His life is in him”*. This does not mean he had not died. As a physician, Luke, who was likely present at this meeting, would have known whether the young man had died or not. Not only was he alive now, but it seems he wasn’t even injured.

V 11-12 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.

And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

“Talked a long while, even till daybreak.” Paul was truly gifted with much drive

and eloquence to be able to go on preaching like this for such a long time. The dramatic recovery of the “*young man*” seems to have jazzed the atmosphere and spurred Paul and his hearers to continue for the rest of the night, for “*they were not a little comforted*” by the boy’s healing.

V 13 Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had given orders, intending himself to go on foot.

“*We. . . sailed to Assos.*” Luke and others of the team went by ship which had to sail around a peninsula to get from Troas to Assos. Paul chose to “*go on foot*”. Walking across the neck of the peninsula took about the same amount of time as going around it by ship. Paul may have used the walk as an opportunity to further teach the Troas believers who accompanied him, or maybe he just wished to get some quiet time and exercise.

V 14 And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene.

“*Mitylene.*” The next stop in the journey was the chief city of the island of Lesbos - a name which has become famous because of the Greek island’s legendary inhabitant, the poet Sappho (about 600 B.C.), and her lyrics expressing strong emotions towards women.



V 15 We sailed from there, and the next day came opposite Chios. The following day we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next day we came to Miletus.

“Chios.” An island south of Lesbos, birthplace of the Greek poet Homer. *“Samos,”* another island near Ephesus, was the birthplace of Pythagoras, a famous Greek mathematician. *“Trogyllium.”* A promontory jutting into the Aegean Sea between Samos and Miletus. *“Miletus.”* A city in Asia Minor about 30 miles south of Ephesus.

V 16-17 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost.

From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.

“Decided to sail past Ephesus.” Still trying to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost,

Paul decided to bypass Ephesus and stop in the town of Miletus where he would meet only the elders of the Ephesian church.

“He was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.” One cannot help but wonder if Paul’s “hurry” was a symptom that the attraction to his old familiar Jewish culture and tradition was exerting too great a pull on him at this time.

V 18-19 And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, *“serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;*

“When they had come to him.” When the Ephesian brethren arrived, Paul began an exhortation to them that continues for the rest of this chapter. This is the only example in the Book of Acts of a recorded address to Christian believers rather than to Jewish or Gentile groups who had not yet become believers.

“With all humility.” This is a crucial aspect of character for anyone with leadership responsibility amongst the fellowship of believers. Humility also marked an important difference between Paul and the “*savage wolves*” and false teachers that he foresaw would come after him. (verses 29-30)

“Many tears and trials, which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews.” From this we can gather that it was a monumental trial for Paul to have to bear with the vicious attacks from the people he loved the most, his own Jewish brethren.

V 20-21 *“how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,*

“testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Kept back nothing that was helpful.” Paul was a good example of love and concern for others.

“Publicly and from house to house.” Paul taught “*publicly*” in the synagogue (three months) and in the school of Tyrannus (two years); besides that, he visited individuals and households.

V 22-24 “And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

“except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

“But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

“I go bound in the spirit.” Previously (19:21), Paul had *“purposed in the Spirit. . . to go to Jerusalem.”* Since the word *“Spirit”* was capitalized, this evidently was a plan that the Lord had given him. But now, the same word *“spirit”* is not capitalized; and this may be an indication that Paul’s plans resulted somewhat from his own bull-headed determination and, therefore, might require some fine-tuning in further prayer and seeking the Lord about them.

Perhaps the Lord knew it was best just to go along with Paul’s wishes. (He gives us the freedom of choice.) Even if those plans were not the ideal, the Lord is capable of working around or through things to bring about His desired outcome.

“The Holy Spirit testifies. . . that bonds and afflictions abide me.” Here *“Spirit”* is capitalized because it is the *“Holy Spirit”*. It was a clear warning given *“in every city”* of the danger that lay ahead. Was Paul being stubborn to insist on going to Jerusalem? Did his idea of being *“bound in the spirit”* mean he was following God’s way or his own way? This is a difficult question to answer, but considering the way things turned out, it seems in this case he was giving too much priority to his own burdens and leadings. Nevertheless, God made it so that the adventure did *“work together for good”*, as we shall see later on. (Romans 8:28)

Up to this time the Lord had used Paul’s determined, persevering nature to bring the Gospel to many lands in the Roman empire. But as with most of us, Paul’s biggest enemy was himself, and the downside to his great determination showed up here in a stubborn insistence to go his own way. It seems at this time he was struggling against this aspect of his own nature. In Romans 7:15-25 Paul makes an interesting analysis of this number one enemy we all have - ourselves. Following are some other quotes on this subject:

If you think the time’s coming when you’ll no longer have to fight self, and sin, and the “old man”, you’re mistaken! I’m still at it! How about you? That’s why we have so many victories: we have so many battles, and so much

to fight against - mostly our own selves! (from lecture by [David Berg](#) - 13 Dec, 1970)

You can be your own worst enemy. In our school we used to have people complaining about evil spirits and demons and devils and, "The Devil did this and the Devil did that and he caused me this trouble and he was the one that delayed me, and I have so much trouble with the Devil." I'd say, "Your problem isn't the Devil! It's our own spirit that we have the most trouble with. Our own spirit is the one that gives us the most trouble!"

Don't blame it on everybody else. You may have conquered all the rest, but your own spirit is the most difficult to conquer, and the only way you're ever going to conquer it is not to conquer it, but to let Jesus conquer it. He's your own best friend!

(from lecture by [David Berg](#) - June, 1985)

V 25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.

"See my face no more." Foreseeing his trip to Rome and possible severe opposition in Jerusalem, Paul did not expect to ever return to the Asia Minor area again. (Paul did, however, make a 4th missionary journey after acquittal from his first Roman imprisonment, and it is fairly certain that he went to Macedonia and Crete; it's possible he may have made it to Asia Minor also.)

V 26-27 "Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

"For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

"The whole counsel of God." Paul had been faithful to feed the new believers with all the milk and meat of the Word they needed. He not only had won numerous converts, but also taught them to become disciples. And thus, he was *"innocent of the blood of all men"*. This stood in sharp contrast to Paul's pre-conversion days when he had been responsible for shedding the blood of many innocent people.

V 28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

"Overseers." The Greek word stresses the leaders' responsibility to watch over

and protect their flocks, *“to shepherd the church of God”*.

This phrasing - *“the church of God. . . purchased with His own blood”* - portrays Christ as God the Son; Jesus is God, a member of the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

V 29-30 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

“Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

“Savage wolves.” Paul may have borrowed this expression from Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:15 - *“ravenous wolves”*. Paul foresaw that *“after my departure”*, outsiders would try to take advantage of his absence. This could have meant persecution from some quarter or the influence of teachers from the Jewish concision. In fact, it seems this was already happening in Galatia and Corinth. (Galatians 1:6, 2Corinthians 11:4)

“From among yourselves.” Even worse than outside attacks are the inside attacks, from leaders who go astray and defect.

“Perverse things.” In Greek this means “distorted, twisted”. That’s what false teachers do with the Word to exalt themselves in pride, or for gain, or whatever it might be.

Paul had already seen the beginnings of these problems with false teachers in the Galatian and Corinthian churches. A few years later, while in Rome and shortly before their martyrdoms, both Peter and Paul wrote epistles, which focused again on this ever-growing problem in the Early Church:

“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words.” (2Peter 2:1-2).

“Charge certain persons not. . . to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations. . . Certain persons. . . have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law,

without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.” (1Timothy 1:3-7, ESV)

“If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.” (1Timothy 6:3-4, ESV)

“There are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers. . . upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach.” (Titus 1:10-11, ESV)

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” (2Timothy 4:3-4, ESV)

Several years later in John the apostle’s *Book of Revelation*, Jesus Himself chides the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira for harboring false teachers and doctrines:

“I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam. . . you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.” (2:14-15)

“I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.” (2:20, KJV)

We may wonder, why was the Lord leading the apostles to concern themselves so with these doctrinal deviations? The answer probably has to do with the fact that the mind is where the will of man is and where he makes his choices. Satan’s power stems from his ability to deceive. For if he can deceive and get control of people’s minds, then he can hinder and prevent them from being fully possessed by God’s Spirit, which in turn prevents them from launching effective attacks against his kingdom.

The mind truly is the battlefield where victories are won or lost. So the apostles knew it was their responsibility to expose and correct the doctrinal errors which they saw creeping in and infecting believers’ minds with doubt, unbelief, or unnecessary distraction.

From another point of view, however, there is such a thing as getting too embroiled in doctrinal disputation. There are many individuals or groups who have quirky doctrines; but nevertheless, are bearing good fruit. It seems that, as long as the important core doctrines are covered - and this is what the apostles of old were dealing with - then the Lord is not overly concerned about minor doctrinal issues that may loom larger in our minds than they need to.

Sometimes a minor doctrine relates to a current issue, and in such a case it transforms into a major doctrine that demands an accurate understanding. A current example might be God's promises to the Israeli nation that they would have certain borders for their land. These are often used as doctrinal justification in our modern times for hostile acts of land-grabbing and oppression of the local Palestinian population who happen to be living in the land that Israelis think belongs to them by divine decree.

In this case, there is a lack of accurate understanding: the promises to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua in the Book of Genesis were fulfilled long ago during the reign of king Solomon and do not apply to the present situation. Another one in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 47, is meant for the future, the age of the Millennium, and also does not apply to the present situation. (For more information on this, see discussion under verse 7 of the [Ezekiel 38-39 post](#).)

The Scriptures hold great authority in the minds of many people, as they should. But when they are being pulled out of context in order to confuse and misdirect people's minds, and to put a sacred veneer over policies that are contrary to the will of God, then this is a serious violation; and such contortions of doctrine need to get straightened out.

V 31 "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

"Three years." Length of time spent in Ephesus, including two years in the school of Tyrannus.

"With tears." Unquestionably, Paul had great compassion and love for his flock. Jesus too wept over those He felt responsible for. (Luke 19:41, John 11:35)

V 32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are

sanctified.

“I commend you to God.” At some point the new trainees have to learn to stand on their own faith. Paul leaves them with a hopeful promise that the *“word of His grace”* would be *“able to build you up”*. Paul showed faith that they could manage without him as they followed and obeyed God’s Word.

What was in use then for Scripture reading and inspiration, we don’t really know. Perhaps the Gospels were circulating by then. There was, of course, the Old Testament, especially the Book of Psalms, books of the Prophets, and history books - all very edifying. The gift of prophecy was another avenue also by which the Church could receive strengthening and guidance.

“Inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Heavenly rewards for those who, because of holding on to their faith, have joined the ranks of those who are *“sanctified”* - the overcomers who during their earthly lives made wise decisions to walk in paths that separated them from the ways and attitudes of the world, in line with one of Christ’s last prayers for His disciples: *“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”* (John 14:15-16).

V 33-34 “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel.

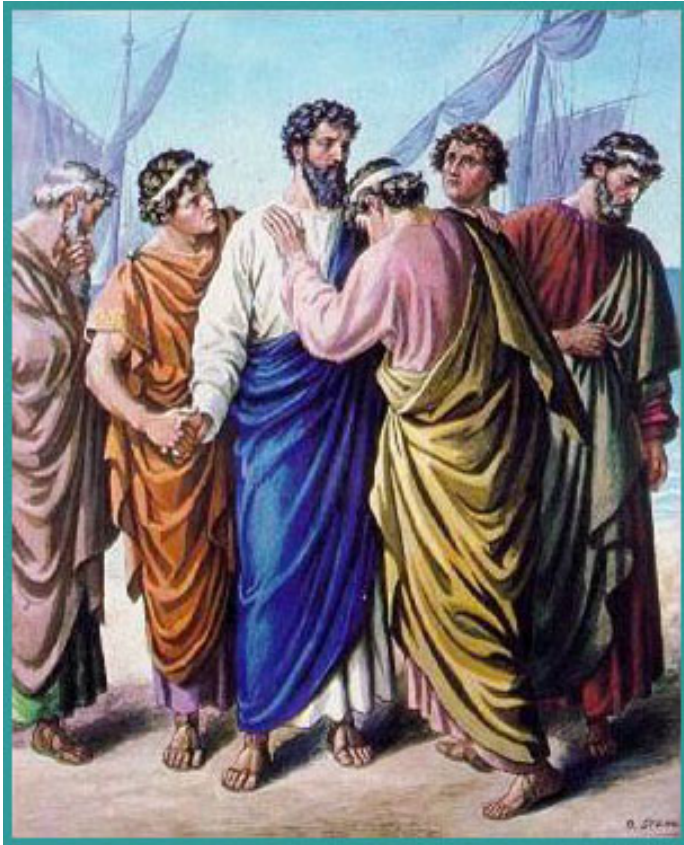
“Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me.

“I have coveted no one’s silver.” As was characteristic of many false teachers. *“These hands have provided for my necessities.”* Paul sometimes worked to support himself, probably in those situations where he was interacting with a new group of believers who hadn’t yet come to fully understand the Gospel, and it was needful not to offend them by demanding support.

V 35 “I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

“Remember the words of the Lord.” This quote, *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”*, was either a direct quote of Jesus that never made it into the Gospels, or a paraphrase of something He said in the Gospels: *“Give to him that asks you.”* *“Give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.”* *“Give, and it shall be*

given to you.” (Mat 5:42, 19:21, Luke 6:38)



V 36-38 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul’s neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

“They all wept freely. . . that they would see his face no more.” The Ephesian elders were deeply sorrowful because of their love for Paul, their shepherd of the last three years or so. Added to this perhaps was the burden of knowing that the responsibility Paul used to carry would now fall on their shoulders.

The departure from Ephesus brought Paul’s third missionary journey almost to completion; all that was left now was the voyage to Jerusalem. The three journeys starting from the first departure for Cyprus until this point are thought to have spanned 12 years from 45 to 57 A.D. During that time groups of believers were established in almost every major city of Asia Minor and Greece. This was the

glorious end result of Paul's and his team's work over those past 12 years.

The following excerpts recount the thoughts of David Berg who in 1970 left behind the churches he had established in the U.S. in order to scout out possibilities for expansion of the *Jesus Revolution* into Europe - similar to Paul's experience of leaving behind the work he had launched in Ephesus:

Ever since I was a little boy, I always wondered why Jesus had to go away. Why couldn't He have just stayed here with us after His Resurrection, personally? Wouldn't that have been a lot better? Why did He have to go away and leave us? And what did He mean He couldn't send the Comforter unless He went away? Why did He have to go away in order to send the Comforter - His Holy Spirit? Why couldn't He stay here and still give us His Holy Spirit?

This has always been one of the greatest mysteries in the Bible to me, and I never fully understood it until early this morning, when I was praying about you and your needs there. .

And suddenly, the Comforter Himself began to comfort my own heart with these words: *"It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send Him unto you!"* [John 16:7]

(from writings of [David Berg](#) - 22 Dec, 1970)

It was said of Paul: *"His letters are weighty and powerful: but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible"* (2Cor.10:10). . .

How do we have these words today? Because he had to go away and write them in his Epistles in his absence, or we might not have the record at all, and the millions who have benefited from them, would be left in the darkness, and only the pitiful few who profited from his physical presence would have enjoyed them and lived by them!

Half the New Testament is the epistles of the men who had to go away - who had to be absent from them in body, that they might be present with them in spirit, and that their words might be recorded for posterity and generations of followers to come.

. . .As long as my father or my mother were around, I always basked in

their Glory. I reflected their light. I enjoyed their presence. I shared the fruit of their labors! And I never could have become what I am today, if they lived on, because I had to go beyond them. . . The memory of them, the truths they taught me, and the spirit they imparted to me, are more of a blessing to me today - help my ministry more today, than their physical presence did then! They had to go away, that I might live beyond them. *“For the works that I do, shall ye do, and greater works also, because I go unto the Father.”* [John 14:12]

(from writings of [David Berg](#) - 27 Dec, 1970)

(Continue to ACTS, chapter 21)