

LESSON 1: ACTS 20:1-38

The Third Missionary Journey: Paul's Address to the Ephesian Elders

1. Read verses 1-3 and review Paul's journeys (and letters) to this point in his life.
2. Now read verses 4-6. Why does Paul hardly ever travel alone? Why do you think he favors teamwork? What do we know about these traveling companions of his? (For Aristarchus, see Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2, Colossians 4:10, and Philemon 1:24; for Gaius, see Acts 19:29 (1 Corinthians 1:14, Romans 16:23, and 3 John 1:1); for Tychicus, see Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, Titus 3:12, 2 Timothy 4:12; and for Trophimus, see Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Timothy 4:20)
3. How did Paul's friends in the towns and cities which he had previously visited show their love and respect for him (vv. 1-16)? What do you think their feelings might have been? (See also 20:36-38.) What good examples do you see here for the way churches should function, and the way in which believers should treat each other (vv. 1-12)?
4. What does the incident recounted in vv. 7-12 tell you about early Christian worship? (Compare Paul's words in v. 10 with Jesus' words in Mark 5:39.) Why would Paul be hoping to arrive in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost (v. 16)?
5. What actions and attitudes had Paul practiced which should serve as a model for Christian leaders (vv. 17-27, 33-35)?
6. What three titles does Paul use in addressing the Ephesian Church leaders (vv. 17, 28a, and 28b)? What do these terms mean? How are they used and put into practice today?
7. Why is Paul going to Jerusalem (v. 22-24)? What is the role of the Spirit in this? What do you make of this? Is this something we should (or can) expect today?

8. What is more important to Paul than personal survival (v. 24)? What is most important to you?

9. What does it mean when Paul declares that he is innocent of their blood (vv. 25-27)? Compare this with Ezekiel 3:18-21, 33:2-9, and Acts 18:6.

10. What warning does Paul repeat and why (vv. 28-38)? How contemporary is this warning? What would protect the elders then and today?