

forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. In JOHN 5:24 we read: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Hopefully these facts from REVELATION 3 will help encourage each and every one of us to get more of the word of God into our own hearts.

Back to our text of ACTS 19:20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.* Jesus, The Word, and The Word of God, is also magnified in scripture as The Word of Truth, The Word of Life, The Word of His Power, and many other such titles as the following scriptures also point out. PSALMS 119:43 *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.* 2 CORINTHIANS 6:7 *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,...* . EPHESIANS 1:13 (speaking of Christ) *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,...* . 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* PHILIPPIANS 2:16 *Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.* 1 JOHN 1:1 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;...* . (Can you imagine what that was like?) HEBREWS 1:3 *Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;...* .

JEREMIAH 9:20 *Yet hear the word of the LORD, O ye women, and let your ear receive the word of his mouth, and teach your daughters wailing, and every one her neighbour lamentation.* ACTS 13:26 *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.* ACTS 14:3 *Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.* ACTS 19:10 *And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.* ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

ACTS 19:20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.* The Greek word translated “prevailed” here is *ischuo* {is-khoo'-o}, number 2480 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and simply means here to be strong, or powerful. It is the second time Luke has used this word in five verses. In ACTS 19:16 we find that the man possessed with the evil spirit “prevailed” against the seven sons of Sceva. Here in verse 20 we find that “the word of God” “prevailed” against all the opposition that was found in Ephesus. The same fact will be true in the life of every Philadelphian full overcomer, that is “the word of God” will “prevail” against all the opposition that comes against us. So let each of us ask ourselves, doest the word of God mightily grow and prevail in my life? Again what a high water mark scripture is this verse of ACTS 19:20 *So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.* May we each attain unto God's best! An expounded translation of ACTS 19:20 reads like this: ‘So irresistibly did the word of the Lord spread, and continued to spread, and demonstrate its power more widely and effectively and triumph.’

Paul's Future Plans Revealed

As we get to this part of our study of the life of the Apostle Paul, Luke gives us a little insight in the future plans, and thinking of the Apostle Paul. These future plans are found in ACTS 19:20 & 21.

ACTS 19:21 *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.* 22 *So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered*

unto him, *Timotheus and Erastus*; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

There really is a lot of information conveyed in these two verses. Luke first notes here *...After these things were ended...*. The phrase "*after the things* " is found twenty-four times in scripture, (PRIESTHOOD), and always signals a change is about to take place. Think of it here like this; a new chapter in the life of Paul is about to be opened. We find the phrase "*after the things* " used in scripture in association with the lives of Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, Elijah, Ezra, Esther, Hezekiah, Jesus, Paul, and the Apostle John. Each of these ten are worthies of faith for sure!

While at Ephesus we have noted that Paul has taught at least seven different doctrines here at Ephesus in his establishing the church at Ephesus. Again these doctrines were the doctrine of eternal security, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of water baptism, the doctrine of the laying on of hands, the doctrine of prophecy, the doctrine of separation, and the doctrine of deliverance. All of these doctrines are found in the mighty word of God, which we found in verse 20 has prevailed here in Ephesus. ACTS 19:10 tells us that Paul was in Ephesus two years before the events of ACTS 19:11-20 were recorded. ACTS 20:31 tells us on Paul's own words that he spent three years in total at Ephesus, and the last part of ACTS 19:22 indicate that Paul was now in his final "season" here at Ephesus, meaning that the events which we will later read about here at Ephesus happened at the end of Paul's three year stay here.

Coneybeare and Howson make mention in their book on *The Life and Epistles of the Apostle Paul* of a short visit Paul made back to Corinth during the three years he headquartered out of Ephesus. Luke does not mention this visit in the record we have of Paul's journeys in ACTS, however there is some evidence of such a journey in the epistles of the Apostle Paul himself. Since Ephesus was the capital city of Paul's Asia, and Corinth was the capital city of Achaia, and since both cities were tied to each other by the mercantile trade utilizing the sea as a source of transportation, it would not have been too hard for the Apostle Paul to make a quick visit back to Corinth, and in a couple of weeks return again unto Ephesus. 2 CORINTHIANS 12:14 in part reads: *...Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you;...*. And a few verses later Paul would write again in 2 CORINTHIANS 13:1 *This is the third time I am coming to you*. This third time Paul came to Corinth was no doubt during the time frame of ACTS 20:2 & 3, which in part reads: *...he came into Greece, 3 And there abode three months*. Since the scripture doesn't give us any more information than what we have just noted concerning when Paul made his second visit unto Corinth, we must conclude that it was a short visit, and really wasn't that important in the over all life of the Apostle Paul, or we would of had more of a record of this visit.

We do get a record of Paul's travel itinerary in ACTS 19:21. ACTS 19:21 *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome*. There are about three steps involved in Paul's line of thinking revealed here. First of all it became apparent to Paul that this wonderful time Paul was having at Ephesus preaching the word of God would come to an end, for he had accomplished all the things that the Lord intended him to accomplish at this particular time. He had successfully established the church at Ephesus, and had taught the believers much during his three year stay there. We read in verse 20 that *...So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed*. Special miracles had be wrought by the hands of Paul, and all they which dwelt in Asia got to hear the word of the Lord Jesus. But there came an end to this as far a Paul was concerned, for we just read *...After these things were ended...*. *After these things were ended...* it was time for some others to pick up the torch and continue the work Paul had started here at Ephesus.

Secondly in ACTS 19:21 we find that Paul had some rather immediate travel plans, which included going to Macedonia, and Achaia, where he again would visit Corinth, and then travel on to Jerusalem. There was a long time concern in the back of the Apostle Paul's mind for the poor Saints in Judaea ever since the conference of ACTS 15. Not much was noted of this by Luke in ACTS 15, however the Apostle Paul makes specific mention of this in GALATIANS 2, which coincides with the time frame of ACTS 15. The essence of this conference that was held in Jerusalem is recalled by Paul in GALATIANS 2:6-10, which reads: *But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be*

somewhat in conference added nothing to me: 7 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; 8 (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) 9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. 10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. This phrase in verse 10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor...* references the poor Christians that were in Judaea. Recall back in ACTS 11:27-30 how Paul and Barnabas really took their first missionary journey together from Antioch, Syria unto Jerusalem, for the purpose of sending relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea. (ACTS 11:27 *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: 30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.*) So when Paul and Barnabas attended the conference in ACTS 15, this same request was again repeated, to remember the poor Christians that were at Judaea. It seems that this request to remember the poor, probably especially at Jerusalem in Judaea, was due to the fact that those Jews at Jerusalem and the surrounding Judaea were poor, especially when compared to the Jews of the rest of the world.

Around this same time frame that is recorded for us in ACTS 19:21, Paul writes his first epistle to those at Corinth, and in this epistle he gives specific instructions for the collection that was to be given unto those at Jerusalem. We find these instructions in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1 *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 3 And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. 4 And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.*

Paul then writes three more epistles before he goes again to Jerusalem, which are 2 CORINTHIANS, GALATIANS, and ROMANS. On your own read 2 CORINTHIANS 8 & 9, and note that the subject of this portion is the collection for the poor of Judaea. In that portion of scripture Paul makes an amazing statement concerning our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9 *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* Then to the Romans Paul writes this in ROMANS 15:25-29, which reads: *But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. 26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. 28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. 29 And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.*

We said that there were three steps outlined in ACTS 19:21 concerning Paul's thinking at this time in his life. The first step involved going through Macedonia and Achaia after leaving Ephesus, and taking a collection for the poor of Judaea. The second step was to take this collection to Jerusalem. The third step in Paul's travel itinerary was then to go to Rome. We just read this again in ROMANS 15:28 and 29, and once again see that a visit to Rome was in his thinking here in ACTS 19:21. ACTS 19:21 *After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. All three of these things Paul purposed to do will all happen by the end of the book of ACTS, however not exactly the same way he envisioned it happening.*