

blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Thus it seems likely that the Apostle Paul would need much assistance in getting around, and he certainly wasn't alone in his travels as he finishes this third missionary journey.

Then we read ...ACTS 20:2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 And there abode three months. This statement of Luke's again agrees with what Paul himself had previously written in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:5 Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. A winter a Corinth would account for the three months Luke mentions here in ACTS 20:3.

The Collection for the Poor Saints at Jerusalem

A lot of things take place in the Apostle Paul's life during this winter in Corinth, which we can learn about in some of Paul's epistles. We have previously briefly discussed some of these points, but not in the detail that we will now go into. One of the major reasons the Apostle Paul was once again revisiting these different cities he had already visited was to fulfill a promise he had made during the conference of Jerusalem, which took place during the time frame of ACTS 15. This promise Paul made is found in GALATIANS 2:10, where Paul told James, Peter, and John that he would remember the poor Saints of Jerusalem. The Apostle Paul years earlier had already been a part of such a missionary journey when he and Barnabas took a collection from the church at Antioch, Syria unto the poor Saints of Jerusalem in ACTS 11:27-30. 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.* Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from Jerusalem after they had delivered this first collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem, as noted in ACTS 12:25 *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.*

While Paul spent this winter in Corinth, he would pen his epistle unto the GALATIANS, and his epistle unto the ROMANS. The importance of GALATIANS chapter 2, besides it's doctrinal teachings, is that it fills in a lot of information that Luke left out when he wrote the book of ACTS, chapter 15. Again the conference of ACTS 15 coincides with the time frame mentioned in GALATIANS 2. In the early verses of ACTS 15 we find Paul and Barnabas having returned to Antioch, Syria from their first missionary journey, and Luke records: ACTS 15:1 *And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.* After this is when the conference of ACTS 15 took place. The purpose of the conference was to once and for all settle the matter if it was necessary for a Gentile to be circumcised in order to be saved. It turns out that Titus, a Gentile Christian, was the focal point of this whole conference, but ACTS 15 doesn't mention this fact. At the end of the conference in ACTS 15 we found that an agreement was reached concerning the fact that Gentiles are not under the law, and a letter was drafted stating such. This letter, or epistle, is recorded in ACTS 15:23-29, and was delivered unto the various assemblies by the various apostles. The Kingdom Apostles delivered this letter primarily unto the Jews, to whom they were sent. The Church Apostles delivered this letter primarily unto the Gentiles, to whom they were sent. GALATIANS 2:1-9 helps point this out. GALATIANS 2:10 also points out a request that was made by the Kingdom Apostles James, Cephas (Peter), and John unto the Church Apostles Paul and Barnabas during the time of the conference at Jerusalem of ACTS 15. GALATIANS 2:9 & 10 -- *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. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do. This is an important point to remember in studying the scriptures concerning the Apostle Paul, and is one reason that he wanted to visit Jerusalem so often, that is to show he was remembering the needs of the poor there at Jerusalem.

*A few months before wintering at Corinth, the Apostle Paul had written them from Ephesus concerning what they were to do to remember the poor Saints at Jerusalem, and he wrote 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.**

From Philippi during the time frame of ACTS 20:1 Paul again gave instructions to those at Corinth concerning the collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem. These instructions are found in 2 CORINTHIANS 8 & 9. As Paul writes these chapters he is again with Timothy, and Titus. Paul's thoughts here concern Titus, and the collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem, realizing that this also has been a consideration of Titus' since the time of ACTS 15 and GALATIANS 2. No doubt the Apostle Paul and Titus had some long discussions concerning the collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem.

Here are some verses from 2 CORINTHIANS 8 and 9 from an expounded translation. 1 Fellow Christians, we want you to know what God's gift of love has done in the churches of Macedonia; 2 The troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so exuberantly happy that from the depths of their poverty they together have poured out a flood of rich generosity. 3 I can guarantee that they were willing to give to the limit of their means, yes and beyond their means, without the slightest urging from me or anyone else; 4 In fact they simply begged us to accept their gifts and so let them share the honor of supporting their brothers in Christ. 5 Nor was their gift, as I must confess I had expected, a mere cash payment. Instead they made a complete dedication of themselves first to the Lord and then to us, as God's appointed ministers. This had led me to ask Titus to complete the arrangements for the same gracious contribution among yourselves, as it was he who started it. 7 You excel in so much already, in faith, in power of utterance, in knowledge of the truth, in devotion of every kind, in your loving treatment of us; may this gracious excellence be yours too. 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 9 (You know how gracious our Lord Jesus Christ was; rich though he was, he became poor for the sake of you, that by his poverty you might be rich). 10 But in this matter I give my opinion: it is to your interest to go on with this enterprise, for you started it last year, you were the first not merely to do anything but to want to do anything. 11 Now, therefore, fulfil your purpose by your deeds, that as you then showed your readiness of will, so now you may finish the work, according to your means. 12 If only one is ready to give according to his means, it is acceptable; he is not asked to give what he has not got. 13 Of course, I don't mean that others should be relieved to an extent that leaves you in distress: 14 but, by equalizing matters, to secure that, on the present occasion, what you can spare may supply their need, so that at another time what they can spare may supply your need, and thus matters may be equalized. 15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. {from EXODUS 16:18} 16 Thank God Titus feels the same deep concern for you that I have. 17 For he not only has consented to my desire, but is himself very zealous in the matter, and departs to you of his own accord, he is so devoted to you.9:1 For of your ministration to the saints (at Jerusalem) it is needless that I should write to you: 2 For I know your readiness and boast of it to the Macedonians on your behalf, saying that Achaia had been ready ever since last year, and most of them have been fired by your zeal. 3 But I have sent the brethren, lest my report of you in this matter should be turned into an empty boast; that you may be truly ready, as I declared you to be: 4 for if I bring with me men from Macedonia and they find you are not prepared, what a disgrace it will be to us, let alone you, after all the confidence we have shown! 5 That is why I have thought it necessary to ask the brethren to visit you first, and see that the free offering you have already promised is prepared beforehand. Only it is to

be a free offering, not a grudging tribute as something extorted from you. 6 Remember this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously and that blessings may come to someone, will also reap generously and with blessings. 7 Let everyone give as his heart tells him to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion; for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 After all, God can give you everything that you need, so that you may always have sufficient both for yourselves and for giving away to other people. 9 (as the Scripture says, He scatters His gifts to the poor; his uprightness will never be forgotten. 10 He who gives seed to the sower and turns that seed into bread to eat will give you the seed of generosity to sow and increase the harvest springing up from your almsgiving;) 11 The more you are enriched by God, the more scope will there be for generous giving, and your gifts, administered through us, will mean that many will thank God. 12 For the rendering of this service does more than supply the wants of God's people; it results in a wealth of thanksgiving to God. 13 While they praise God for the proof thus given of the obedience wherewith you have consented to the Glad-tidings of Christ, and for the single-mindedness of your liberality both to them, and to all; 14 Moreover, in their prayers for you they express the earnest longings of their love towards you, caused by the surpassing grace of God manifest in you. 15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

While wintering at Corinth we have noted that the Apostle Paul would pen his epistle unto the GALATIANS, where he once again writes about Titus in chapter 2, and again makes this statement concerning the collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem: GALATIANS 2:10 *Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.* About three months later while still at Corinth, Paul pens his epistle unto the ROMANS. Note what he writes in ROMANS 15:25 & 26 -- *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.* Once again we see that the collection for the poor Saints at Jerusalem was paramount upon the mind of the Apostle Paul during this winter he spent at Corinth.

The main point of emphasis with this portion is that Paul was mindful of those poor Saints at Jerusalem, and so was Titus, who having also been to Jerusalem with Paul, and witnessing first hand their poverty, thus offerings were taken up along the way of Paul's missionary journeys for the poor Saints at Jerusalem. Again referring to ROMANS 15:25 & 26 we see that Paul was intending to go to Jerusalem after visiting Macedonia and Achaia, and, in fact, this is what he did. Quickly flashing ahead in time, Paul, and those traveling with him at the conclusion of this third missionary journey, arrived at Jerusalem bearing this what must have been a large chest of alms and offerings for the relief of the poor Saints at Jerusalem. Alms by definition is a donation to the poor. And how did the brethren of Jerusalem receive Paul and the men with him at the conclusion of this multi-year journey? ACTS 21:17 tells us: *And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.* At first glance it would seem that the brethren received them gladly because of the offerings they were bringing, however ACTS 21:18 and 19 seems to indicate that this offering wasn't presented unto the church at Jerusalem until the next day. ACTS 21:18 *And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. 19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly (that is step by step) what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.* One of the things that God had worked in the heart of the Gentiles through Paul's ministry was this offering to the poor Saints at Jerusalem, which fulfilled the charge that James and Peter and John had made unto Paul back in GALATIANS 2:9 & 10, and that being *...that we should remember the poor...* . Luke next records in ACTS 21:20 *And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, ...* . No mention is made of this offering until twelve days later in ACTS 24. By the time frame of ACTS 24 Paul is a prisoner of the Roman empire, and is before the governor of Judaea, Felix, defending himself. In ACTS 24, and in verse 17 Paul makes a reference concerning this collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem; ACTS 24:17 *Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.* This particular statement got Felix's attention, and Felix held Paul hostage partly for this reason, ACTS 24:26 *He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him...* .

What happened to this offering Paul and the brethren with him brought to Jerusalem? I believe ACTS 2 and ACTS 4 give us the answer. In ACTS 2:42-47 we read: *42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common; 45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* ACTS 4:32-35 speaks again of those Saints in Jerusalem, and states this: *32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.*

So what happened to this current offering Paul and the brethren brought to Jerusalem is that it was probably distributed by James, the pastor at Jerusalem noted in ACTS 21:18, and the Kingdom Apostles still at Jerusalem, unto those who were in need. In the early days after Pentecost we find that Barnabas was one of the one who at the first sold land and brought money unto the Apostles at Jerusalem. {Study ACTS 4:36 & 37.}

So that we don't get the idea that Paul collected this offering for himself, or his personal ministry, we need to examine some other scriptures which clarify this point. First of all it was the Holy Spirit who sent Paul and Barnabas to *...the work whereunto I have called them.* {ACTS 13:2}. And it was the church at Antioch, Syria which sent them away on this Paul's first official missionary journey. ACTS 13:3 *And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.* Part of this sending them away would include financing the journey. ACTS 13:3; 14:26; 15:3; and 15:40 all hint at this.

Secondly, when Paul became needy himself he didn't live off of the churches he was establishing, but rather he worked with his own hands. The following scriptures plainly point this out, and I will give them in the chronological order in which they were written. I THESSALONIANS 2:9 *For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.* II THESSALONIANS 3:7 *For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; 8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: 9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.* After Paul had left Thessalonica he, in time, came to Corinth. After arriving at Corinth Paul through his trade met up with Aquila, a fellow tradesman. This is recorded for us in ACTS 18:1-3, and verse 3 reads: *And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.* In other words, when Paul came to Corinth and had needs, he worked at his trade of tent making, thus making a living. He also labored in the ministry labouring freely unto the Lord. Note what Paul writes in his next letter to those at Corinth; 1 CORINTHIANS 4: 9 *For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. 11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; 12 And labour, working with our own hands:...* 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Thirdly we note as Paul went along the pathway designed for him of the Lord he did receive financial support from some of the previous churches he founded, and 2 CORINTHIANS 11:9 points this out; *And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and [so] will I keep myself.* Previous to this statement Paul wrote in verse 7: *Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?* Paul then goes on to warn those at Corinth, who had by this time received many Apostles, that they should be aware of false apostles. They would know the false apostles because the false apostles didn't follow Paul's example of what an apostle should be. In other words if someone claimed to be an apostle and were charging money to preach, they were false apostles! At this time frame of our study of ACTS 20:1-3, when Paul would write the ROMANS his epistle, he stated in ROMANS 8:32 *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* The "all things" he was writing about included the finances he needed; *...how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

Paul preached the gospel freely, and the Lord supplied all of his need. JEREMIAH 17:5 states: *Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.* There are way too many Pastors today trusting in man to meet their needs. The full overcomers trust in the Lord to meet all of their needs. JEREMIAH 17:7 states it like this: *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.* This describes the heart attitude of all full overcomers! As an Apostle, Paul, over a period of time, wrote the following: GALATIANS 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* EPHESIANS 4:28 *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* PHILIPPIANS 4:19 *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Paul had years of Christian experience to draw on when he wrote: *...my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* Prior to writing this verse, Paul recalled his early years when he first visited Philippi, and he wrote about it in PHILIPPIANS 4:15-17: *...Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.* So we see that Paul, everywhere he went, preached the gospel of Christ freely, and those Saints showed their appreciation by giving of themselves apart of their bounty to further the gospel. *...God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. {2 CORINTHIANS 9:7,8 & 11}.*

Paul Writes his ROMANS Epistle

ACTS 20:2 *And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, 3 And there abode three months.* We have noted that these three months equate to a winter at Corinth, which Paul had mentioned was his plan when he wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:5 *Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. 6 And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.*

This winter at Corinth must have been kind of like a vacation for the Apostle Paul. A time he could relax somewhat from the hectic schedule of being the Apostle unto the Gentiles. And one of the relaxing things he did here was write his epistle unto the ROMANS. The book of ROMANS turns out to be the centerpiece for all of Paul's gospel records. It probably took him the better part of three months to write it. Sister Bodie notes: "The letter to the Romans is a very important one. It lays the foundation for all of