

# The Danger of “Dropping Off”

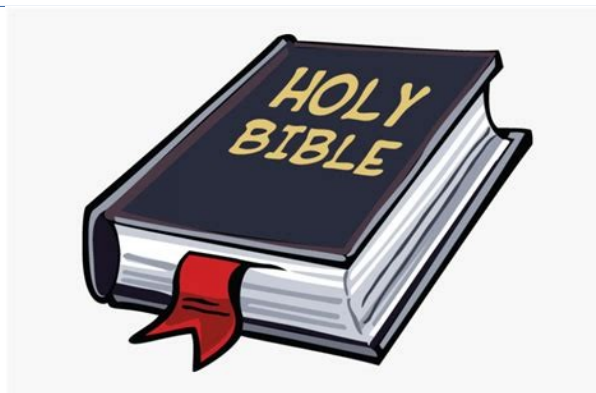
Acts 20: 1-16



When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-bye and set out for Macedonia. He travelled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months.

Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

... we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.



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The end of Paul's 3 year stay in Ephesus

Around AD 54 -57

During his time of mission there:-

He had written to Corinth ( the first letter)

He made a quick, painful visit to Corinth, and having returned to Ephesus, wrote a 'painful letter' (referred to in 2 Corinthians 2)

In God's wisdom this 2<sup>nd</sup> letter no longer exists.



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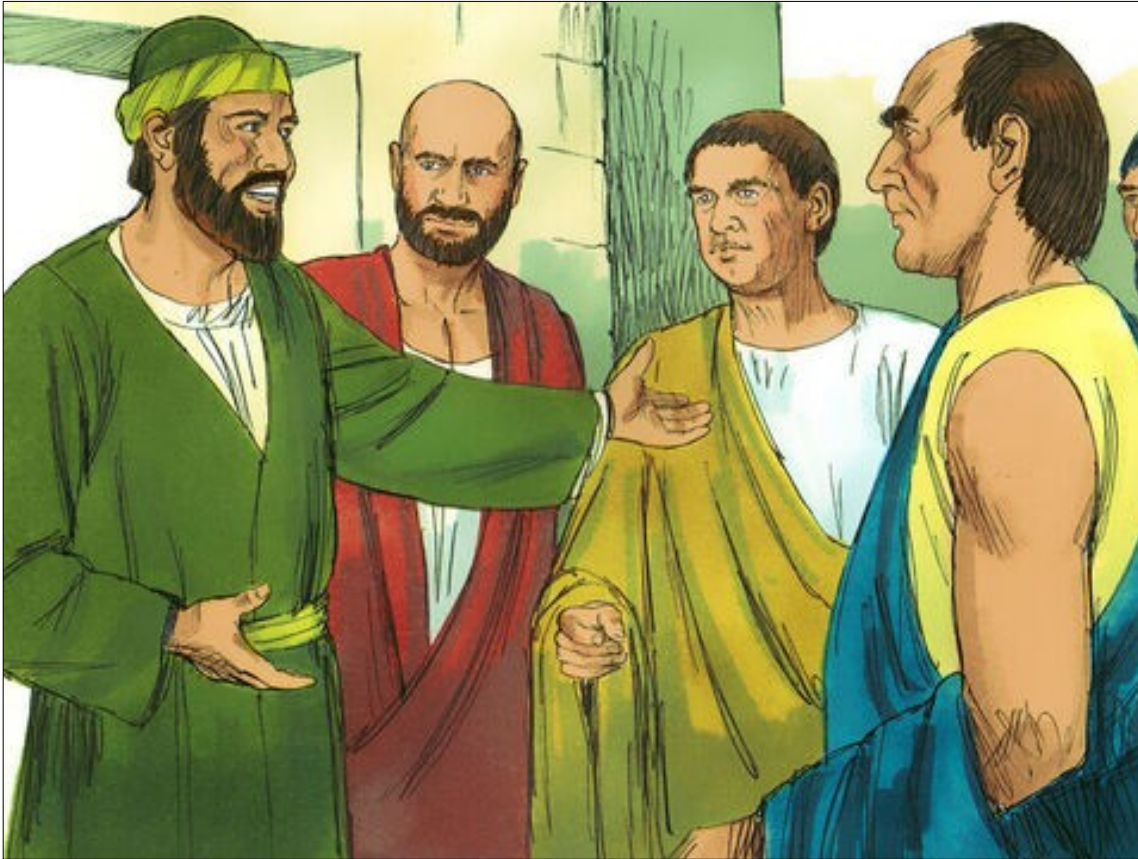
It was now time for Paul to leave the Ephesian brothers and sisters with a farewell blessing

He travelled through that area,



On his way he sent Titus ahead to Corinth to organise the collection and test the scene at the church. He returned to Paul in Macedonia, who then wrote a 'third' letter to the Corinthians ( known as 2 Corinthians).

He travelled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months.



He visited the churches founded during the previous (2<sup>nd</sup>) mission, encouraging the believers, and he finally arrived at Corinth, staying for three months during the winter period, when travelling was more difficult.

It was spring time in the following year, near the time of the feasts of Passover and Pentecost. Many Jews of the Diaspora journeyed to Jerusalem for the feasts, some were probably on the ship that Paul intended to travel on.



Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.



There was a plot to kill him on board ship by some non-believing Jews.

However, there was another Divine intervention – the plot was discovered so Paul took an alternative route overland via the places he had previously visited.

God had a further purpose for Paul.



He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.



These men were representatives of the different donor churches – This would show honest handling of the gifts for the Judean believers and also provide for their safety while travelling. It would have been a good time for fellowship too.

These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.  
But **we** sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread,



It appears that Luke rejoined the group at Philippi, possibly having been left there after Paul's first visit (Acts 16). Luke and others remained and spent Passover in Philippi, remembering Jesus' as the Lamb of God. (Our Passover Lamb— 1 Corinthians 5:7)

and five days later joined the others at Troas,  
where we stayed seven days.



They rejoined the travelling group and visited the believers at Troas.

This was a special place where God had first guided Paul to begin the mission into Europe. Acts 16

On the first day of the week we came together to break bread.

# The First Day SUNDAY

This is the first reference in Acts of believers gathering on Sunday (the first day) to worship.

Paul had written to the Corinthian church in his first letter from Ephesus concerning the collection on the Lord's day. (1 Cor. 16:2)

Probably it was in the evening since many would have been slaves having to work during the day.

They met to break bread

– not just for a meal but for communion also.

Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

Paul preached during the meeting.



Seize the opportunity! –  
There was limited time during this visit so ...  
He talked until midnight! It was good teaching ... but

There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.

Health & Safety rules were different then.



The lamps were for lighting – it was dark by now.

- 1, A warm, smokey atmosphere ?
- 2, People and lamps reducing oxygen in the room.
- 3, Tired from the day's work.

There was a risk of 'dropping off'

Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, he was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on.

Eutychus (his name means 'Lucky')  
It was a big chance to hear Paul, but ...



On the window ledge – a seat with a bit of air?  
The preacher kept going! - his sleepy eyes got heavier ....

When he was sound asleep,  
he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.

He dropped off in more ways than one.



How to spoil a good meeting? - Paul stopped speaking.



Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him.



Why?

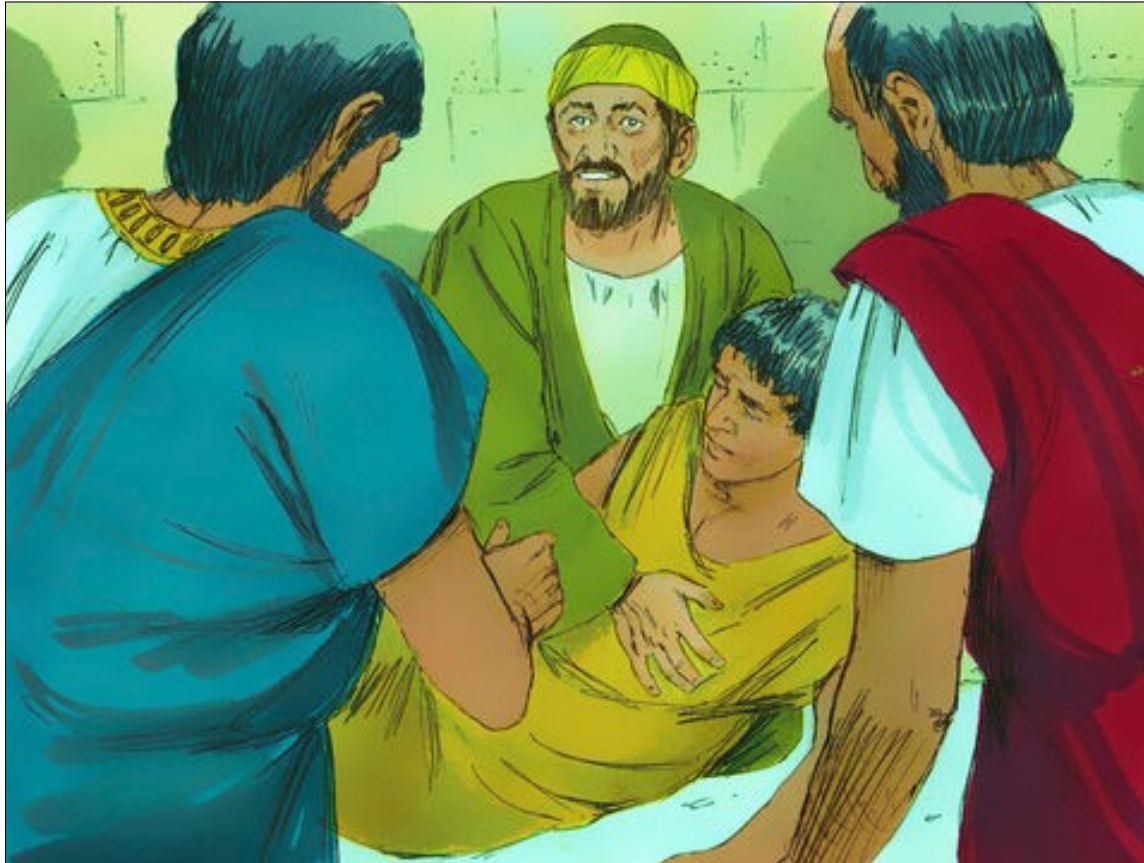
Had he been reading about Elijah and Elisha?

(Lucky wasn't cold yet)  
But what happens when you warm up a dead body?

They stay dead.

Was it for prayer, identification, a sign of concern?

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"



The Lord used Paul to raise him to life again.

Imagine the relief and joy for all who were there.

Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate.



It was a good time for the communion and a meal together

They took a break.

After talking until daylight, he left.



Then back to preaching/talking ... and nobody else fell asleep!  
Perhaps someone took notes so they could remember what  
Paul had taught them.

The people took the young man home alive  
and were greatly comforted.

Wow! That was some meeting!

Paul's preaching

A shock surprise

Communion

A shared meal

And more preaching

About 12 hours long?



We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard.



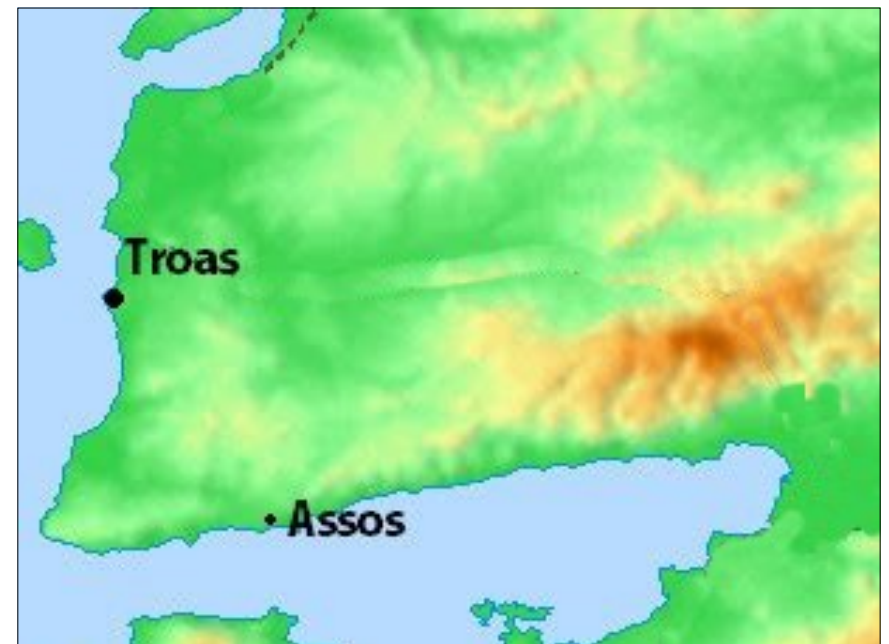
They left Paul behind in Troas, perhaps to see how Euyichus was doing.



He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot.

Was this an opportunity for a short (30 mile) journey on his own?

A quiet time for meditation, prayer - to chill



# A Greek Island Cruise ?

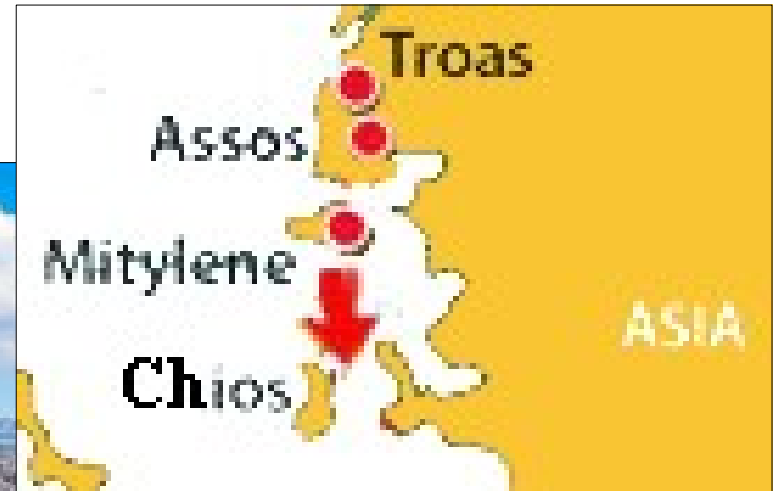
When he met us at Assos,  
we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene.





# A Greek Island Cruise ?

The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios.



# A Greek Island Cruise ?

The day after that we crossed over to Samos,



and on the following day arrived at Miletus.



These ruins of Miletus are in Turkey.

It may have been a restful time on board with a chance to appreciate  
the natural beauty of these places  
Do you have eyes to see the glory of the Creator in his creation?



But remember, even in the most idyllic places broken humans live  
and need to hear about our Saviour.

But it wasn't a holiday outing.  
They were on a mission and there was work to do in Miletus  
before he set sail for Jerusalem.



Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.



It would have been a good time to help the believers in Judaea.

Paul and his companions had been forced to return by an alternative route. However, in the providence of God they were able to bless many people on the way.

“God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.”



How do you react when your  
‘plans’ get changed?  
It may be God’s over-ruling  
for a special purpose.  
Faith is required.

*Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things  
God works for the good of those who love him,  
who have been called according to his purpose.*