

SESSION FOUR – PAUL’S TRAVELS

(Acts 18:23-28:31)

Paul’s Third Missionary Journey and Rome – The Final Journey

“Luke tells the story of Paul’s encounter with the Risen Jesus in three ways, in a different manner each time, depending on the demands on the context...In short, Luke tells the story of Paul’s conversion in three different ways, each of which he has adapted very carefully to its narrative context. What Luke has is one story, or one tradition, which he has employed in different ways.”

- Beverly Gaventa, *From Darkness to Light*

Acts 9:1–19 (The Historical Narrative): Written in the third person, this is Luke’s initial description of the event. It covers Saul traveling to Damascus, the blinding light, the dialogue with Jesus, and the subsequent ministry of Ananias to restore Paul’s sight.

Acts 22:1–21 (The Defense to the Jerusalem Crowd): Delivered in the first person, Paul recounts his testimony to a hostile Jewish audience. He emphasizes his strict Jewish background, strict adherence to the Law, and the role of Ananias (described as a devout man according to the law) to make his story relatable to his countrymen.

Acts 26:1–23 (The Testimony Before Agrippa): Also in the first person, Paul shares his defense before King Agrippa and Governor Festus. This version is tailored for a Gentile and Roman leadership audience, providing a summarized commission that focuses heavily on his direct call to the Gentiles and omitting details like Ananias and his initial physical blindness.

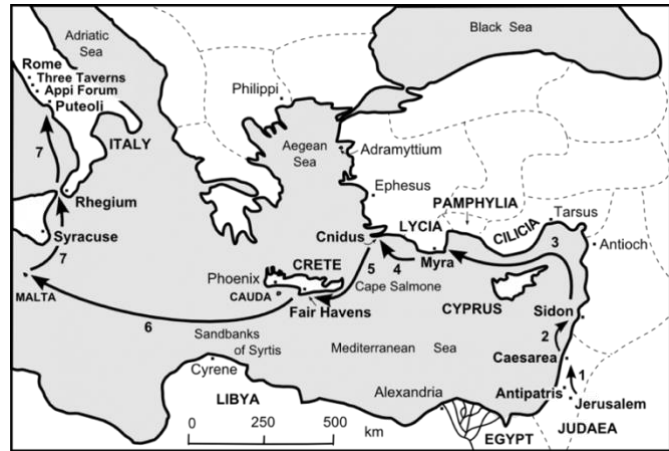
Third Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23–21:16)

- **Companions:** Paul and various team members like Timothy and Titus.
- **Route:** Revisit of Galatia and Phrygia, an extended stay in Western Asia Minor, and a return trip through Macedonia and Greece.
- **Key Stops:** Ephesus, Troas, Miletus, and Tyre.
- **Major Events:** Spent over two years teaching in Ephesus (where a major riot broke out) and heavily strengthened the churches in Greece before heading back toward Jerusalem.



Voyage to Rome (Acts 27–28)

- **Route:** Sailed from Caesarea under guard, stopped in Crete, and shipwrecked on the island of Malta.
- **Major Events:** Arrested in Jerusalem after the third journey, Paul appealed to Caesar as a Roman citizen and ultimately arrived in Rome, where he spent his final recorded days under house arrest preaching.



Paul's Traveling Companions

Timothy	Silas (Silvanus)	Erastus	Gaius
Aristarchus	Tychius	Trophimus	Luke
Sopater	Secundus	Pricilla & Aquila	

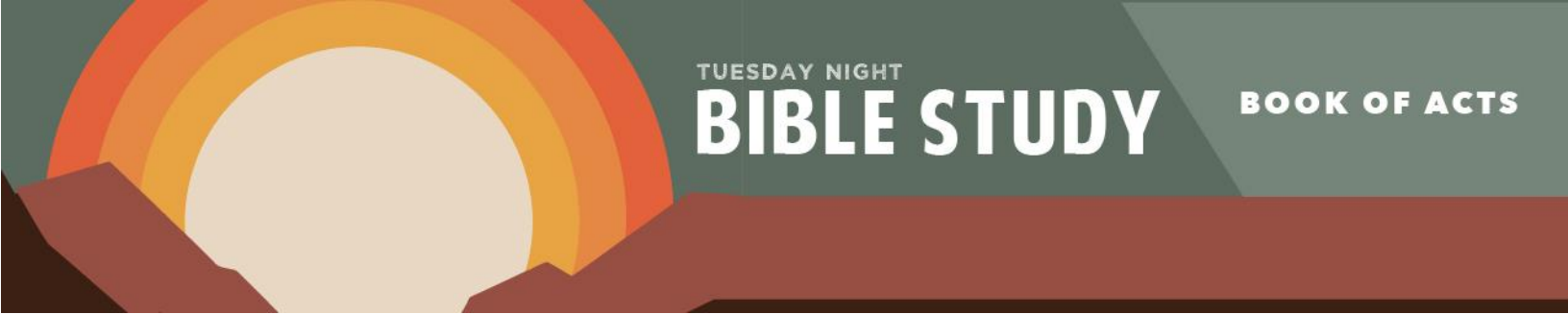
Eutychus

"Sermonettes make Christianettes," the saying goes, so Saint Paul kept talking till midnight to make sure they all got the word. Then he thought of a few things he'd left out and went on a while longer. He was so caught up in his own eloquence that he didn't hear the bumblebee sounds that were emerging from a young man with his eyes more or less closed and his mouth more or less open who sat slumped over in the third-story window. It was only a woman's scream that alerted him to the fact that the boy had fallen asleep, and out, more or less simultaneously. When Paul asked his name, they told him it was Eutychus.

Everybody thought Eutychus was dead, but Paul said he'd see about that. Then he went back upstairs where, after a snack, he ran over his major points once more just to make sure. When he finally left on the early bus, they found Eutychus sitting up in bed asking for two over light and a toasted English.

This miraculous recovery, plus the fact that by then the saint was already well on his way to the next county, made them decide to throw a double celebration. Presumably somebody had the sense to suggest that this time they use the ground floor. Acts 20:9-12.

- Frederick Buechner in *Peculiar Treasures*

**Luke In The First Person**

Acts 16:10

Acts 20:5-15

Acts 21:1-18

Acts 27:1-28:16

Eating Is Important to Jesus and His People

Luke's Jesus goes to dinner parties with Pharisees (Luke 7:36-50; 11:37-40; 14:1-24); tax collectors Luke 15:1-2; 19:1-10) and the poor (Luke 10:38-42). The meals were images of the presence of God's kingdom (Luke 10:7-9). Jesus eats with his disciples at the Passover Meal before his resurrection (Luke 22:14-22) and again with his disciples after the resurrection (Luke 24:13-35 & 24:36-43).

Acts begins with Jesus eating with the disciples (Acts 1:4). A mark of the new Christian community was (Acts 2:42,46). Deacons were selected for the daily food service (Acts 6:1-3). Paul's conversion story includes the fact that "after eating, he regained his strength." (Acts 9:19) Peter is directed through a vision to eat with the Gentile Cornelius. (Acts 10). Paul publicly calls out Peter for refusing to eat with Gentiles (2:11-14). In the midst of the shipwreck as Paul journeys to Rome, Paul offers bread to the crew and prisoners (Acts 27:33-38).

Discussion Questions

1. Read the three accounts of Paul's encounter with the Risen Christ.

- a) Acts 9:1-19
- b) Acts 22:1-21
- c) Acts 26:1-23

How do they differ? What is Luke doing by telling the same story three times?

2. Why did Paul travel with companions? What difference does it make to travel with a companion? Why is it important to travel with a companion?

3. Do you listen to a story that is written in the first person differently than to one told in the third person?

4. Compare Luke 9:16-17, Luke 22:14-20, Luke 24:30-31, and Acts 27:35-38. What do these passages have in common? What phrases are repeated?