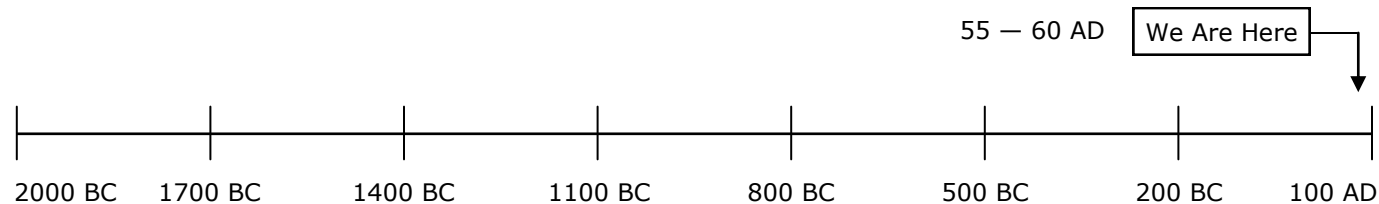


Living a Life with Purpose

BiAY.org | Reviews

Week 48: Nov. 26—Dec. 2 — *Acts 20, 21; Romans; 2 Corinthians* 91.7% Complete — 29 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Map of Paul's Missionary Journeys (p.121), Overview of Bible History (p.37)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

Our reading started in the middle of Paul's third missionary journey. In essence, he retraced the route from his second trip, visiting again the churches he established and encouraging all believers along the way. While Paul had company on his first two journeys, this time he was alone. However, he had developed a network of support (Timothy, Apollos, Luke, Tertius, Trophimus); these men were an encouragement to him.

A Letter to the Romans

Before traveling to Rome, to visit the Christians there, Paul sent a letter to them. Of all his letters, this one was unique in that it laid out an organized presentation of the Gospel, describing our problem with sin and the path to salvation. In last week's review (Week 47), we discussed the first half of this book. Now, let's look at the second half.

1. God works all things out for our good and His glory (8:18-30).
2. Nothing can separate us from the love of God (8:31-39).
3. God has used Israel's unbelief to open salvation to Gentiles (9:1-11:36).
4. Our response to God should be complete surrender and sacrifice (12:1-21; 13:8-14).
5. God has established earthly authority for our good; we should respect it (13:1-7).
6. We should strive not to violate either our own or others' conscience (14:1-15:13).

The book of *Romans* is incredible, a treasure trove of rich doctrinal truths in which we as Christians should be well-versed. I would encourage you to spend time in this letter later.

A Second Letter to the Corinthians

Sometime after he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul sent another one from Ephesus. This one was a result of the response of the people as given to Paul through Titus. In the letter, Paul set forth several contrasts; let's consider a few of them.

1. **The New Covenant of Christ vs. the Old Covenant of Law** (2:12-3:18): "If the old covenant, which brings condemnation, was glorious, how much more glorious is the new covenant, which makes us right with God? That first glory was not glorious at all compared with the overwhelming glory of the new covenant. So if the old covenant, which has been set aside, was full of glory, then the new, which remains, has far greater glory" (3:9-11).

2. **The Cares of Life vs. the Comfort of God** (1:3-11; 4:8-18): "Be sure that the more you suffer for Christ, the more God will shower you with His comfort. When you are weighed down, it is for your benefit and salvation. Our present troubles are small and won't last long, yet they produce an immeasurably great glory" (1:5, 6; 4:17).
 3. **Believers v. Unbelievers** (6:14-7:1): Believers should be careful when siding with unbelievers. "How can goodness partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? What harmony is there with Christ and the Devil? How can a believer partner with an unbeliever? What union can there be between God's temple and idols?" (6:14-16).
 4. **Cheerless vs. Cheerful Giving** (8:1-15; 9:1-15): "If you are eager to give, it's not important how much you give. You must each make up your own mind as to how much you should give. Don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves the person who gives cheerfully; He will generously provide all you need" (8:12; 9:7, 8).
 5. **Paul's Ministry vs. the False Prophets** (11:1-12:10): "I fear somehow you will be led away from your simple devotion to Christ... You believe whatever anyone tells you, even if they preach a different Jesus than I did... I don't think I am inferior to these 'super apostles.' I may not be a trained speaker, but I know what I'm talking about" (11:4-6).
- Personal Application

In *Acts 20* and *21*, Paul made two statements that are very challenging to any believer. Consider these two statements and how they could impact your life.

1. **Don't Waste Your Life** (*Acts 20:24*): "My life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned by the Lord Jesus... the work of telling others the good news about God's love." Paul says it without regret — the Christian life is wasted if we are not about the work that God has assigned us. The Christian life is not about getting saved and hiding in some corner until Jesus comes back. He has saved us, empowered us with the Spirit, enabled us with gifts, and equipped us with His Word to make a difference in the world in which we live, to engage society with the good news of His saving grace.
2. **Whatever It Takes, Lord** (*Acts 21:1-14*): " 'Why all this weeping? You are breaking my heart! I am ready not only to be jailed at Jerusalem but also to die for the sake of the Lord Jesus.' When it was clear that we couldn't persuade Paul, we gave up and said, 'The will of the Lord be done.'" People were trying to convince Paul to stay clear of Jerusalem, because they knew that he would be mistreated. However, nothing anyone could say could keep him from God's will. Being found obedient to God was more important to Paul than being socially rejected or physically hurt. He was going to follow God's lead no matter what the cost. Oh that we would have the same determination and drive!

The Bottom Line

To live a life of *purpose*, we must be careful not to *waste* our time but to *invest* it for Christ's sake.

Questions to Consider

1. What did you find personally challenging from reading *Romans* and *2 Corinthians*?
2. Looking back over your life, are you guilty of wasting any part of it? How so?
3. Do you know the assignment God has given you? How did you figure out what it was?