

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why does God withhold the future from us?
2. How can the past help us with the future?
3. What should our attitude be when looking into the future?
4. What are some assuring promises that we have in His word regarding the future?
5. Are the evils Paul warned against evident in our churches today?
6. How necessary is it to warn against possible evils creeping into the church?

SUMMARY:

As Paul looked back over his ministry, he could testify to the Ephesian elders that his service had been all sincerity and humility, teaching “*repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*” With a very uncertain future—the Jews laying in wait for him—he was willing to yield himself to it, for whatever the Lord had in store for him. Nevertheless, whatever was to be, he wished to finish his course with joy in the ministry, testifying of the gospel of the grace of God.

NOTES:

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Bible Lesson #2

January 8, 2006

First Quarter

FACING THE FUTURE WITH GOD

LESSON TEXT: *Acts 20:17-38*

LESSON SETTING: Paul is on his way to Jerusalem from Ephesus, via Macedonia.

TIME: Approximately 58 A.D.

I. PAUL’S FAITHFULNESS. Acts 20:17-21

- A. In Humble Service (vs. 19) Matthew 10:42
- B. In Persecution (vs. 19) 2 Corinthians 11:24-28
- C. In Teaching (vs. 20) Acts 15:35; Acts 18:11
- D. In Faith (vs. 21) Acts 27:25; Hebrews 11:33

II. PAUL’S FUTURE. Acts 20:22-27

- A. Uncertain (vs. 22) James 4:14
- B. Complete Consecration (vs. 24) Philippians 3:7-8
- C. To Testify of the Gospel. Matthew 28:19

III. PAUL’S FAREWELL. Acts 20:28-38

- A. Warnings Against Evils to Come Upon the church
 1. Wolves (vs. 29) Matthew 7:15
 2. Deceivers (vs. 30) Romans 16:18; 2 Corinthians 11:12-14
 3. False Doctrines. Colossians 2:8
 4. Warnings are Necessary. Ezekiel 3:18, 20; 33:9

GOLDEN TEXT: *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 20:32

NEXT SUNDAY'S LESSON: Ephesians 1:1 through 3:21

SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES: Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 7:6-14
Deuteronomy 32:1-14

QUARTERLY THEME: Life and Writings of Paul

TOPIC: A VICTORIOUS CHURCH

INTRODUCTION:

All believers, Jews or Gentiles, having the Holy Spirit within their hearts, make up the true Church of Christ. Born-again Christians, no matter where they live or what their status in life, represent the body of Christ, His Church here upon the earth. We are redeemed, His saved ones for whom He died and have no reason to boast of our own works in accomplishing this feat, because all was done by Him. He gave us the grace to repent, to receive Him, to be forgiven, and to have a cleansed heart to be occupied by the Holy Spirit. All this was a gift of grace and all praise and glory belong to God. We cannot glory in any of our own good works. They are nothing.

This Spirit is given to a cleansed heart as a down payment for the future blessing, namely eternal life. Because of our deep appreciation and love for Him, our walk in this life should be full of faith and works for Him. Even the heavenly principalities and powers are watching us to see how it's possible for a human being to walk this earth in righteousness. It is only because we permit the Spirit of Christ to rule within and motivate our thoughts, words and actions.

CENTRAL TRUTH: The Christian walks confidently in the knowledge that God plans his future.

GOLDEN TEXT: *BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST.*

Ephesians 1:3

Paul was bringing the Gospel message to both Jew and Gentile. There could hardly have been two people more different in customs and background, more opposite in their manner of living. The Israelites were living under the Law, while the Gentiles did "that which comes naturally." Yet, now the grace and power which is in the shed blood of Christ was sufficient to bring these two together into one Church because as Peter said, "*God put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith.*" Acts 15:9

Even today, God is still adding to His Church souls from "every clime and nation" because Jesus, Himself, said "*and other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.*" (John 10:16) All who answer the voice of the shepherd will be "raised up to sit in heavenly places" and can be a part of His victorious Church and share in "all spiritual blessings."

Triumph thou, God's city fair,
Built by Christ with loving care!
Church of God, rejoice, for He
From the Heavens guardeth thee.

Worship, glory, honor bring
Unto Jesus Christ, our King!
Peace He gives, - e'en in the storm
He protects His church from harm!
Z. H. 133:1, 7

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF January 9–15

M. Promise of Victory. Deuteronomy 7:6-14

T. *Reason for Victory. Ephesians 1:1-6

W. *Source of Victory. Ephesians 1:7-14

T. *Prayer for Victory. Ephesians 1:15-23

F. *Faith for Victory. Ephesians 2:1-10

S. *Foundation of Victory. Ephesians 2:11-22

S. *Messenger of Victory. Ephesians 3:13-21