

# WARNINGS AGAINST WOLVES

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Acts 20:1-38

LESSON 347 Junior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:9).

## [BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

### Acts 20:1-38

<sup>1</sup> And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

<sup>2</sup> And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

<sup>3</sup> And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

<sup>4</sup> And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

<sup>5</sup> These going before tarried for us at Troas.

<sup>6</sup> And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

<sup>7</sup> And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

<sup>8</sup> And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

<sup>9</sup> And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

<sup>10</sup> And Paul went down, and fell

## [BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

### [NOTES:](#)

#### **Keeping the Faith**

Paul was coming to the close of his third missionary journey. Many people had been saved through his preaching; but everywhere he went there had also been those who opposed the Gospel, which he preached.

Paul's ministry had not been an easy one. The Lord had warned him when He first called Paul that there was much suffering ahead for him. But Paul had never let that stop his preaching. In spite of all the persecution he had had to endure, he could say at the close of his life, "I have kept the faith."

There have been many youthful ministers who have started with a courage and zeal to preach all the Word of God; but in their later years they have lost that keen desire to preach all the Word. How thankful we are that we have Paul's example, proving that it is possible to keep that same zeal and steadfastness right to the end of our lives. We thank God for the examples we have had in our day, too, -- those who have been faithful unto death.

Paul had done the work God had called him to do, regardless of whether people wanted to listen to him or not. He said: "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

#### **A Week at Troas**

Paul and his friends stayed seven days at Troas, and on Sunday they met with the disciples of that town to worship. These people had had little opportunity to hear Paul, so he had many things to tell them. His sermon went on and on until midnight. There was one young man who could not stay awake. He was sitting in the window; and when he went to sleep he fell out of the window. It was three stories to the ground, and the fall killed him. Of course, the whole congregation was very much excited. Paul, however, had faith that God would restore the young man to life. He did as Elijah and Elisha had done when they brought back someone from the dead: he "fell on him," and embraced him, and prayed with all his heart. Then he calmly told the people, "Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." He had raised him from the dead through the name of Jesus Christ, for whose sake Paul was willing to suffer and be martyred.

Throughout Paul's ministry the theme of his preaching was Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God. And because of his utmost confidence in Jesus, he could work miracles through His name.

#### **No Smooth Sayings**

Paul had spent much time in Ephesus, and he wanted to have one more talk with the leaders of that church. He knew he would never come their way again, so he called for them to give them some last-minute instructions, to warn them of the dangers that lay ahead.

Paul had preached that one must be born again. He had warned against sin in every form, against idol worship, against those who tried to get to Heaven by doing good works instead of believing in Jesus. He had never told the people "smooth things" just to win their favour and make himself popular among them. He had felt responsibility for their souls. He knew that all the people who listened to him would some day have to stand before

on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

<sup>11</sup> When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

<sup>12</sup> And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

<sup>13</sup> And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

<sup>14</sup> And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

<sup>15</sup> And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

<sup>16</sup> For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

<sup>17</sup> And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

<sup>18</sup> And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

<sup>19</sup> Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

<sup>20</sup> *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

<sup>21</sup> Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our

Jesus to be judged. If they were not free from sin they would have to be banished to eternal punishment.

What if Paul had not told them that they must be saved from sin? They would be lost, and it would be his fault. But Paul could say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." He also said, "I am pure from the blood of all men."

#### **Watchmen**

What a feeling of satisfaction he must have had to know that he had done all he could to help them to be saved! They could never stand in the judgment and point an accusing finger at him, saying, "You never told me."

A prophet once wrote that if a watchman failed to warn the people of trouble, and those people suffered, God would require their blood from the watchman. Paul had warned the Ephesians that the wages of sin is death, and that they must repent and be saved in order to go to Heaven; so he was free from their blood.

#### **Grievous Wolves**

The people in the church of Ephesus had believed Paul's preaching and had been saved, but that was not the end of their fight against Satan. Paul warned them that after he was gone "grievous wolves" would come into their midst, "not sparing the flock."

He was not referring to animals, but to false preachers who would come among them and tear down what Paul had preached. Paul said: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). He knew that ministers would come who would say that it is not necessary to be born again. Some would say that one can be saved and sanctified at the same time. Some would say that it is not necessary to make restitution to people we have wronged. All those things, and many more, would be false doctrine. The person who preaches such things will be cursed.

#### **Bought with His Blood**

The church was precious to Paul. He had been willing to give his life that those people might be saved. But the church was still more precious to the Lord, because He had purchased it with His own Blood. There was no other price great enough to pay for our sins. Jesus had to shed His Blood to pay for our redemption, so we are indeed precious to Him.

#### **Satan's Weapon**

Not only would false preachers come into their congregation to try to lead them to an easier way, but some from their own midst would deny the faith. They would become proud, and would want people to love and honour them instead of Jesus and His appointed ministers. They would flatter people and win their support through briberies, and then draw them from the church to follow a new doctrine.

This did not happen in the church of Ephesus only. One of Satan's best weapons against the Christian has been pride. He comes to a spiritual person and begins to whisper in his ear and tell him how good he is and how much good he is doing. Then he may add that the person is not appreciated, and he should get a following of people around him who would appreciate his good works.

Some people say, "Get thee behind me, Satan: . . . for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Such keep their faith in God and His appointed leaders. But others will listen, and soon begin to feel that perhaps they are not being appreciated. If they cannot get the whole church to feel as they do, they will take a group of admirers with them and start a new church. That is how a great many false religions have

Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>22</sup> And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

<sup>23</sup> Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

<sup>24</sup> But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

<sup>25</sup> And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

<sup>26</sup> Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*.

<sup>27</sup> For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

<sup>28</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

<sup>29</sup> For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

<sup>30</sup> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

<sup>31</sup> Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

<sup>33</sup> I have coveted no man's silver,

begun.

Jesus said that if He would be lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself. Paul always preached Jesus, and never exalted himself. He said that he had served the Lord "with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations."

One time a group of people had taken a particular liking to Paul. Others in the congregation preferred another minister, Apollos. Paul asked, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed" in Jesus (I Corinthians 3:5). He asked: "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:13). Our business is to preach Jesus, and forget about man. Of course, we honour and reverence those who tell us about Jesus; but let us remember that Jesus is the Rock upon which our faith is built. Though all men should fail, He will stand forever.

### **Bound in the Spirit**

For three years Paul had warned the people against the dangers that lay ahead. Now he must leave, and he prayed that God would keep them in His tender care.

The road ahead was not going to be easy for Paul. He said: "I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Could we go ahead as courageously as Paul did if we knew that nothing but trouble lay ahead of us? if we knew that in every town we entered there would be someone who wanted to hurt us? Would we continue to carry the message of salvation?

Do we consider the Gospel important enough to give our lives for it? Countless thousands through the ages have done so. They counted not their life dear unto death, and they could say with Paul: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Timothy 4:8).

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What did Paul say concerning his faith when he came to the end of his life?
2. How much of "the counsel of God" had Paul preached?
3. What happened to the young man who fell out of the window when Paul preached until midnight?
4. What did Paul say about any other doctrine than what he had preached?
5. Why is the church precious to Jesus?
6. Whom did Paul mean when he spoke of wolves?
7. Name one of Satan's dangerous weapons.
8. How does Satan tempt the Christian?
9. How important was the Gospel to Paul?

or gold, or apparel.

<sup>34</sup> Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

<sup>35</sup> I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

<sup>36</sup> And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

<sup>37</sup> And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

<sup>38</sup> Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.