

Memory Verse

Acts 20:24

But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

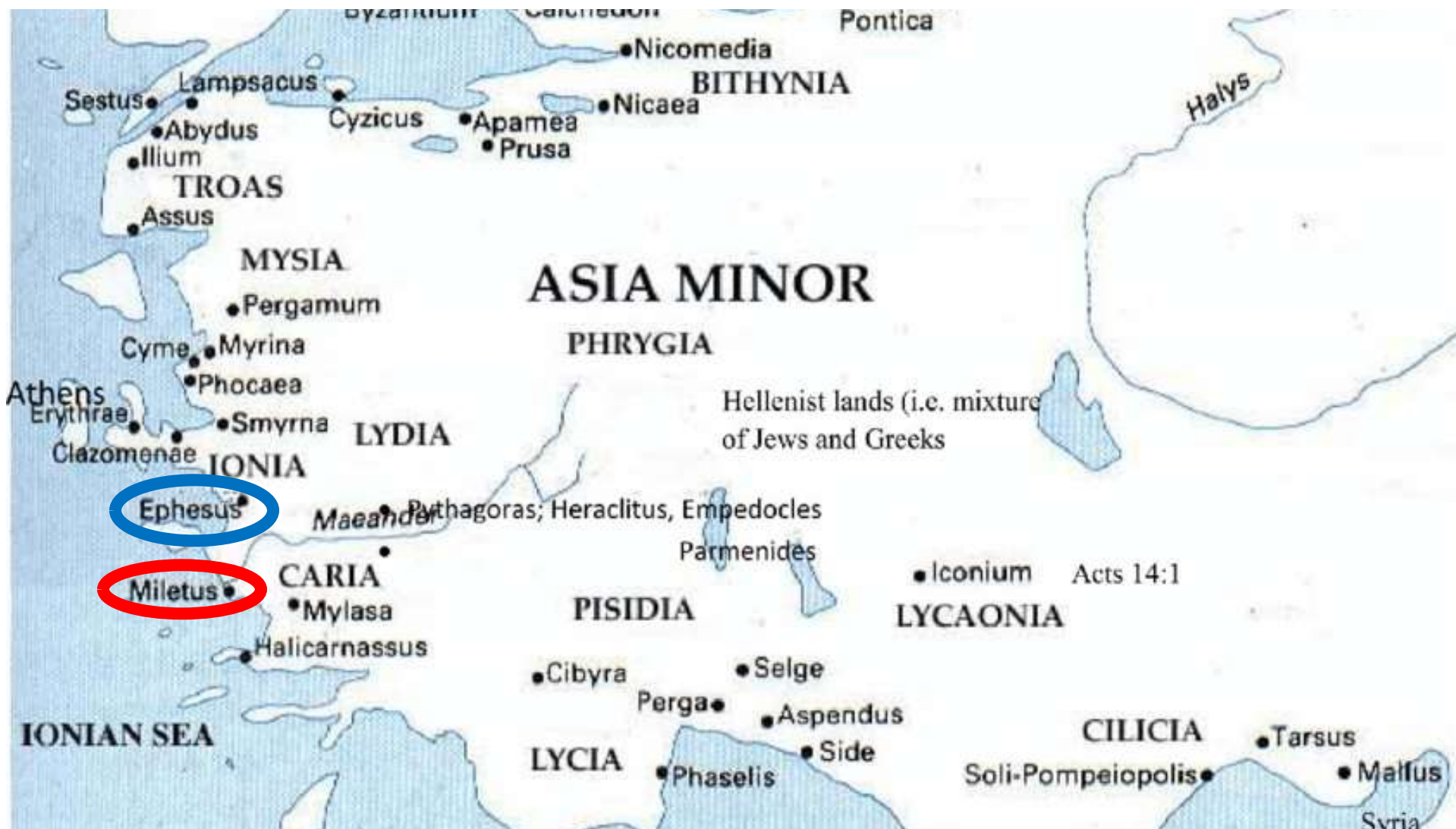
GRACELIFE



CHURCH

A night sky filled with stars, with the dark silhouettes of trees visible at the bottom. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

Last Words
Acts 20:17-38



A. Acts 20:17-21 - Be Active

Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. 18And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, 19servicing the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the

A. Acts 20:17-21 - Be Active

Jews; 20how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, 21testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. Acts 20:17-21 - Be Active

Here is the *location*. Paul reminds them of the **past**. He reminds them of *how he lived, served the Lord and proclaimed everything they needed publicly, and privately*. He proclaimed to the **Jews** and **Gentiles** *repentance and faith in Jesus*. This tells us a lot about Paul's life and ministry. He *lived among these leaders...*

A. Acts 20:17-21 - Be Active

Next, we see **Paul's ministry**. He *proclaimed* and *explained* everything they needed to live and serve the Lord... He *didn't hide anything*. He *didn't pick one topic and neglect everything else*. He *didn't discuss the nice stuff and ignore the hard stuff*. He taught them in a *variety of places* - **public** and **private**...

B. Acts 20:22-27 - Be Aware

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

24But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received

B. Acts 20:22-27 - Be Aware

from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. 25And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. 26Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, 27for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

B. Acts 20:22-27 - Be Aware

Paul now *turns to the present*. He says "*now*," more than once. He is going to go to Jerusalem and doesn't fully know what will occur. But he does know, *revealed* by the Holy Spirit, that he will be *put in prison* and *afflicted*. He talks to them about his *perspective on life* in verse 24...

B. Acts 20:22-27 - Be Aware

Paul said they won't see him again, and he was ***innocent of the blood of all***, because he ***proclaimed the whole counsel of God***. This refers to the ***watchman***. They stood on the walls of a city and watched for enemies. If they ***saw the enemy coming*** and said nothing and the city and people were destroyed, it was the ***watcher's fault*** and the ***blood of the people was upon his head...***

B. Acts 20:22-27 - Be Aware

Paul *proclaimed* ***God's word*** to them. For our lives, and for this and any other church, we need **ALL** of God's word. Don't pick and choose which parts you like and which parts you don't like. Don't deny, demean, or dismiss the difficult texts and doctrines. *Study the whole counsel of God, for your life, family and the church.*

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

Paul is talking with the elders, pastors or leaders from Ephesus. He **warns them** and *tells them to pay close attention to themselves and the church - 2 things.*

Pay attention to your lifestyle, your thinking, way of life, attitudes and doctrine.

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

Next, Paul *told them to **pay attention** to and care for the flock, the **church**. He then says the **Holy Spirit** put them in that position, though they had a desire, as Paul mentions in *1 Timothy 3*. He states a **theological fact** - *God purchased or obtained the church with His own blood! **How?** Through the death of Jesus...**

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

First, beware of the ***fierce wolves that will come in***. He uses the shepherd imagery of savage wolves. These are *those who attack and tear sheep apart*. Paul refers to Jesus' words of *wolves in sheep's clothing*. He tells the leaders to beware of those who will *come in and feast on the flock...*

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

Second, beware of **those who will arise from within**, speaking twisted or distorted things. They *twist truth into a lie*, like satan. Why? To **deceive** others into following them, *rather than God and His chosen leaders*. This can happen in *any church, ministry, or family*. Don't forget that! These can occur in **families** too. What does this mean for a **church**?

C. Acts 20:28-31 - Beware

Paul tells them, to **be alert**, be **awake**, **don't sleep**, **don't become spiritually or intellectually lazy** or **deceive yourself**. Beware of **ignoring Paul's warning**, which is God's warning! He **warned them night and day**, or at every opportunity. He admonished, warned, and pleaded with them... **with tears!** His motivation was... **love**.

D. Acts 20:32-38 - Be Christlike

And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. 35In all things I have shown you

D. Acts 20:32-38 - Be Christlike

that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" 36And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38being

D. *Acts 20:32-38* - Be Christlike

sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

D. Acts 20:32-38 - Be Christlike

He commends them to **God's grace**, to build them up and give them the inheritance, a *very Jewish phrase*. Paul then *talks about his life and attitudes*. He didn't covet anyone's money or possessions. He **worked** to provide for his needs and the needs of those with him. It was *common* in that day for a Rabbi's, and Pharisee's to have a job. He reminds them to *work hard and help the weak...*