

## In the Falcon's Eyes

***“But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:8-9)***

As the lion retreat before nothing and stately walk among the earth beast, and as the king feeling secure while his army around him, the same we can say to the falcon waiting in the sky for his prey to appear, then nothing can stop him from raiding to grasp it. And, the same thing we can say when we love to achieve a task for we found ourselves elated on overcoming hurdles and nothing would stop us from gaining the victory.

Is it a challenge to us if we can remember from our past that we achieved our goals without difficulties? Absolutely No! For we know it very well to reach a certain position in our profession, or to finish a higher study, or to maintain a particular skill it needs a hard work. A lot of sacrifices need to be offered, and patience in abundance needs to be poured out while we are in our journey to achieve that goal. But, we persevere in doing it because we are appreciating the pleasant end and gratifying taste of victory. And we do it with confidence that comes from the sharp falcon's vision that sees the goal from a far.

This time we will fly over the wings of the time back in 55 A.D., to reach a city in the province of Asia over the Mediterranean region called Ephesus. A city inhabited by a few Jews and majority of the pagan Greeks. Here we will find the Jewish synagogue, and the main temple of the goddess. Artemis which brought worshippers from all over the world and contributed to the city's financial prosperity. There we will meet Paul in his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He arrived to this city by travelling through the land, and there he met few of the disciples whom he baptized by water and whom God baptized by the Holy Spirit and planted with them the Church in Ephesus. Paul had in his heart the great goal in preaching the word of God on travelling to Ephesus. But when he arrived there he faced high opposition to preach the truth. To start with, from the obstinate Jews and later on suffered the persecution from part of the local Greeks because they were running business of shrine-making to the goddess Artemis, the business that suffered the threat of collapse upon the spread of the Gospel in Ephesus.

So, that was the scene and that was the situation around our champion Paul whom at this stage was writing the letter to the Corinthians, from where we chose our passage and where we can point exactly what was going on around Paul, the Falcon! And, in analyzing that passage we can come out with the following fact that reflects Paul's thoughts, plans, attitudes and reactions:

**1) *Concentration on the goal:*** (But I will stay on at Ephesus...) Paul's desire was to visit the Church in Corinth, but he suppressed this desire and fixed his eyes on his prey "Ephesus" and the noble goal he came to achieve.

**2) *Patience:*** (I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost...) The Falcon may stay long time in the sky waiting patiently for the suitable time for his prey to appear in accessible position to attack

it. And that was what made Paul to stay longer at Ephesus, for ***“this” went on for two years, so that all Jews and Greeks who lived in the Province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.***”(Acts 19:10)

“Paul stayed until Pentecost.” The feast of Pentecost was for the Jews but for Christians it was a celebration commemorating the pouring of the Holy Spirit over the disciples. And, figuratively speaking 'I will stay until Pentecost', or until the appearing of the Holy Spirit on the Reality State that mark the victory of any spiritually inspired Lord's mission. So, that was what really happened in Ephesus for ***“God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even the handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.”*** (Acts 19:11-12)

**3) *Appreciation for the great task God delegated to him:*** (because a great door...) Paul comprehended the honour that God lavished on him when he found himself in a city with a strong resistance to the Lord's message. And the great door of resistance in the eyes of Paul was recognized as a blessing from God.

**4) *Confidence:*** about the certainty of the nature of his mission to Ephesus. For in spite of the great opposition this did not shake him and did not make him doubt about the will of God for his presence in Ephesus and for what God wanted him to do there. And, this is positive and prudent look, for his mission will lose its value without such resistance and opposition.

**5) *The need for plenty efforts:*** (for effective work...) In response to above situation in Ephesus there were many things to be done and hard work required to pave the way towards the victory.

**6) *The foreseen victory:*** (has opened to me...) The close door of resistance opened, and the fighting serpent finally grasped by the falcon. ***“When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus held in high honour.”*** (Acts 19:17)

**7) *The spirit to conquer:*** (...there are many who oppose me) In spite of many Jews and Greeks who opposed him he found in them the target to teach himself and to develop the spirit to overcome in reaching his goal, the Ephesians.

***My Dear and Beloved:*** Few more questions remaining: Are we at the great door? Do much opposition bless us? Do we need to work hard in our jobs, families and in our ministries? Are we living in contemporary Ephesus? What God wants to tell us from this passage? Do we know the delegated task? Are we elated by the foreseen victory? Can we answer this one more question: Does Paul still in Ephesus or he left early to another city? Men of honour one more thing before we close, ***“Be on guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:13)

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\*please read Acts Chapter 19 & 20:1 about Paul's Journey to Ephesus.