

Tychicus

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[0 : 0 0] continue then this evening with our short series on what we have called key links in the chain of gospel grace. We've been looking at those who are not themselves apostles, but who are what we might call the next generation, down those who may have been taught or converted through the instrumentality of the apostles, and who themselves would help to pass on the message to the next, what we might call the anonymous generation, coming after that key link stage generation, the key links between the apostles and the church that was to follow. Almost all of whom, in fact we might say indeed all of whom without exception, would be amongst those who had not seen the Lord Jesus in the flesh, had not known him personally during his time upon earth, but who nevertheless would, like us, hear the gospel from somebody, and by means of somebody, perhaps by an apostle, perhaps by another, but they would hear the word, they would respond to it, and they would come to the use of the Lord in that great cross. And some of them would only be serving for a comparatively short period of time. We looked in the opening item in the series at Lydia, and the service that she rendered with her home and her household in Philippi, the first proper, we might say, established church in the continent of

Europe. We looked also at the brief, single mention there is of Manasseh, the one who was the host for Paul and his company as they went up to Jerusalem just prior to Paul's arrest, and whose home would have formed the base for Paul for what would be certainly for many months, his last days as a free man in Jerusalem. We then looked most recently at Epaphroditus, and his work in and with the church in Philippi, and also as the servant, the minister to Paul during his captivity in Rome. And we will look this evening, for a little while, at the person of Tychicus. Tychicus, who is mentioned here in the passage that we read in verse 4, along with various other people, who accompanied Paul into Asia, Sophater of Berea, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe and Timotheus, and of Asia,

Tychicus and Shophimus. Now, Tychicus is unique amongst those that we're looking at in the key links in that he is the one mentioned most diversely. He is mentioned five times altogether in the New Testament, once here, and also in the Ephesians and the Colossians, once each, and in Titus, and in 2 Timothy. And he's mentioned just once each on those occasions. That's quite a spread. It's a far bigger spread than any of the other key links mentioned in five different books of the New Testament.

And yet we know, as with all of them, we know comparatively a little about him. All that we know from this opening verse is that he is from Asia. Now, Asia, we've got to keep in our heads that the Asia that's talked about in the Bible is not the vast continent that stretches nowadays from Istanbul to the Pacific, and from the Arctic to the Indian Ocean. It's not that huge continent.

It is a small portion of southern and western Turkey, what is now Turkey, of course, which was the Roman province of Asia, which corresponds roughly to about the size of the Irish Republic.

[3 : 5 1] If you were to take Northern Ireland out of the island of Ireland, then the land mass that you've left with roughly squashed into the middle area that was the Roman province of Asia. It's just that wee section of the middle part, the southern western middle part of western Turkey. And of course, the letters to the seven churches in Revelation to the seven churches of Asia, and they're all dotted around that little province, roughly the size, we say, of the Irish Republic.

And amongst that area in Asia, obviously, Ephesus was the capital of Asia. And he's mentioned, Tychicus is mentioned along with Trophimus. Trophimus we know to be from Ephesus. Tychicus we don't.

And we know that Trophimus is from Ephesus because if we turn a couple of pages, and we find that the time when Paul is taken by the mob in Jerusalem, we read in chapter 21, verse 29, they had seen before with him in the city, that is in the city of Jerusalem, Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom

they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. So Trophimus we know was from Ephesus, but we don't know that Tychicus was. Obviously, being from Asia, he must have been converted at some point during Paul's comparatively brief visits to that area. If we were to go to chapter 18 of the Acts of the Apostles, we would see Paul's first actual visit to that area. If we could just skip back a couple of chapters before that, if you were finding chapter 16, it would say that when they had gone, verse 6, when they had gone throughout Phrygia, that sort of mid, slightly western bit of Turkey, or what is now Turkey, the region of Galatia, roughly central Turkey, and were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, south-western

Turkey. They were come to Mysia, north-western Turkey. They assayed to go into Bithynia, northern coast of Turkey, but the spirits suffered there not. And passing by Mysia, so basically through a sort of corridor of land from Phrygia, which is sort of central western Turkey, they come down to Troas, which is just south of what is the Dardanelles, where of course the Gallian the Lee campaign and the First World War was fought. So just south of that is Troas. Now the Roman province of Asia is to the south of that. They didn't go into that. They were prevented on Paul's second missionary journey, as we call it there, from going into that.

But in chapter 18, in verse 18, we do read that after he left Corinth and so on, he left them, intended to sail into Syria, chapter 18, verse 19, he came to Ephesus and left them there, some of his company, but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not, but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem, that I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. And that's his first brief visit into Asia proper. Then chapter 19 is taken up almost entirely with his time in Ephesus, in Asia. And I think a significant verse in chapter 19 is at verse 20, where we read, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. So during that time, somewhere in that time, this Tychicus of Asia comes to be converted. Why do we say he is not from Ephesus itself? We don't know for sure, of course, but it would imply that the textual evidence would imply, if you look at where he's mentioned in Colossians. Colossians chapter 4, at verse 7, we read, all my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, this is the Colossians, unto you, who is a beloved brother and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate and comfort your hearts, with Onesimus, about whom, of course, the letter to Philemon is all written about, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. So Paul is writing to the Colossians that Onesimus is one of you. He's from Colossae, like Philemon is as well. But he doesn't say that Tychicus is from Colossae.

[8 : 37] And when he's writing to the Ephesians, and of course, some of you will know that much of the letter to the Ephesians is very, very similar to much of the letter to the Colossians. Some of it is almost word for word in terms of its actual content. But where we read in chapter 6, verse 21, in Ephesians, we read, that he also may know my affairs and how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother, and faithful minister, and the Lord shall make known to you all things, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs and that he might comfort your hearts. But he doesn't say, Tychicus, who is one of you?

Tychicus, who, like Trophimus, is of you in Ephesus, an Ephesian Christian, doesn't say that. Now, surely, if he's mentioning Onesimus as being belonging to Colossae, then he would say to the Ephesians, or to the Colossians, or whichever city that Tychicus belonged in, who also was one of you. But he doesn't say that. Later on, writing to Titus, who of course, remember, was based in Crete, we find that Paul writes to him saying in verse 12 of chapter 3, When then shall send Artemis unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto thee to the Colossae, for I have determined there to winter. And if we turn back a couple of pages, 2 Timothy, the last letter that Paul wrote, which we still have evidence of, or we still have preserved to us, chapter 4, verse 12 of 2 Timothy, Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus, in other words, back into Asia, the capital of Asia. So these are the five mentions of Tychicus. And what do we find in it? Well, we find him primarily associated with work in Ephesus and the surrounding area, not surprisingly. Being from the province of Asia, Paul sends him backwards and forwards from Asia to his own ministry, wherever that is based. If it's in Rome, where he's a prisoner, he's using Tychicus to go backwards and forwards. Something we should notice still about that second letter to Timothy. In 2 Timothy, Paul writes how many have forsaken him, many have gone away from him. If we go to 2 Timothy chapter 1, verse 15, This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia have turned away from me, of whom are figulus and hermogenes. The Lord give mercy to the house of Vanessa Paulus and so on. Now, it doesn't

mean every single Christian in Asia has turned away from me, but it must mean those in whom he had trusted, those whose churches he had helped establish, or those amongst whom his gospel had come. Many of them are turned away from them. He identifies figulus and hermoigenes as ringleaders of that, but clearly, in his final hours, in his last days or weeks as a captive in Rome, 2 Timothy is thought to be written not long before his execution.

We read that, Whilst Demas had forsaken him, this is chapter 4, verse 10, having loved this present world and has departed unto Thessalonica, he then says, Crescens has gone to Galatia. It doesn't mean Crescens has forsaken him too, just means that he has been sent somewhere else, and presumably missionary business, or taking messages from Paul. Titus, of whose character we have no reason to suspect anything, has gone to Galatia, again, almost certainly on missionary business. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, bring him with thee, for he is profitable to thee from the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. That's the context of it. Tychicus isn't here because I had sent him to Ephesus.

[12:24] So he's a perfectly good reason why he is not there. Now, remember that in that same chapter, chapter 4 of 2 Timothy, at verse 16, Paul writes, At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all men forsook me.

I pray God it may not be laid to their charge. Now, you might think, okay, what does this first answer mean? Does it mean he was first brought up to trial, and then he was taken down while they deliberated, and then he was to appear back before the court again, and there was nobody with him at that time?

He says, only Luke, his doctor, the beloved physician, is with him. Everybody else is gone. Either because they have forsaken him, or, like Tychicus, they have been sent away.

They've been sent away in legitimate business. Have we got reason to say, well, oh, but if Tychicus hadn't been sent away, he'd be there, he'd be loyal? Well, I would suggest to you that we do have evidence for that.

Because the very fact that he is mentioned, and by word of explanation, writing to Timothy, why Tychicus isn't there, why he's all alone except for Luke, it's because he sent Tychicus away.

[13:34] He sent Crescens to Galatia, he sent Titus to Galatia, or what is now basically Albania, Yugoslavia. Only Luke is with him. Tychicus has sent to Ephesus. In other words, if Tychicus hadn't been sent away, he would be there.

He would be right there with them. Clearly, this is one who, having received the gospel either personally under the hand of Paul, which is possible, but it's not essential.

He could have received the gospel by second hand. You know, that Paul had preached, somebody had heard it, he'd passed the word on, Tychicus had believed it. And then when Paul came back to Ephesus, he had come to hear Paul, he had attached himself to Paul.

Clearly, he would not be so devoted a follower of Paul as he is described to be in Acts 20, verse 4, along with Sopriter of Berea, and Aristarchus, I know the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus of Asia, Tychicus and Trothimus.

These are quite diverse areas that are being spoken of. You know, Derbe and Timothy, who's from Lystra, these are areas of Galicia, central Turkey. The Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus, Thessalonians in northern Greece.

[14:50] Berea, likewise. Asia, western Turkey, Tychicus and Trothimus. They're coming from quite different, diverse areas. Significant areas where Paul has preached.

He has drawn to himself, not just volunteers, because there might be those who he hangs on for various reasons or whatever, but the suggestion, especially when you look at the example of Timothy, is that Paul himself, or those who are faithful and close and reliable, that Paul would choose who he wanted to go with him.

You know, to begin with, if you think about his argument that he had with Barnabas. His argument with Barnabas at the end of Acts chapter 15, where Barnabas wanted to take Mark, John Mark, with them, who had gone with them on their first missionary journey, but he had gone home quite early on.

And Paul wasn't convinced that somebody who had sort of chucked it in early on should come back with him again. So, they have such a sharp contention that they part one from another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed into Cyprus, and Paul, use this word, chose, Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the greats of God.

Okay, he chose Silas, and again, when we find in chapter 16, a couple of verses later, he came to Germany and Lister, and behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess in Belize, but his father was a Greek.

[16:16] And he was well reported on by the brethren who were at Lister, and they called him, Him would Paul have to go forth with him. And took him and circumcised him because of the Jews which were there. Again, the emphasis is, Paul chose Timothy.

Paul chose Silas. It is not unreasonable to suppose that of those who are coming with him from all these significant key areas, Galatia, and Troas, and Asia, and Thessalonica, and so on, all these people that are coming.

He has chosen these people from these particular areas, either for their gifts or their reliability, or for the fact that he can work with them, or the fact that their personalities might shine well with his, so they work together like a well-oiled machine as opposed to grating against each other.

But the suggestion leading between the lines would be that Paul chose those who would be his companions. It's not just a case of William, volunteer, me, me, me, me, take me.

Because they might be completely unsuitable. They might end up not lasting the course. They might not have the kind of gifts or characteristics that are necessary for what will often be hard slog and great danger in the work of the Gospel.

[17:32] So the implication would surely be that Paul had chosen Tychicus from whatever part of Asia he came from, probably not from the capital, Ephesus, but somewhere else round about.

Because he had been converted, because he had been touched by the Gospel, he therefore adhered to the Apostle, who had been the instrument of bringing that Gospel, either personally into his own life, or secondarily had been the means of bringing that Gospel, which had so changed Tychicus' life.

And because he was devoted to the Gospel, and because he was devoted to the Gospel, he was devoted to this particular servant of the Gospel. And we often find this ourselves, if we look back in our lives, there's probably some one or two people who have been instrumental under God.

Instrumental in our being brought to faith. It may be the witness, or the example of maybe a godly Sunday school teacher, or an old elder that we knew, or a work colleague who was a shining example of a Christian, or somebody in a home, or extended family, or somebody who encamped it, or whatever the circumstances may be.

He certainly would not need to be an ordained person, or a preacher necessarily, just a Christian who was genuinely converted, and lived out the witness of that Gospel.

[19:03] And they could be used of the Lord in such a way as to change our lives. And if we love the Lord, we would likewise always retain a certain affection and respect for that person.

And if that person happened to be a powering leader in a church, then so much more devoted would we be to that person, not because they become our God, but because we love the true God, we likewise love this person being used of God.

And that would suggest, the evidence would suggest, this is the relationship between Tychicus and Paul. That because he loves the Lord and has been converted, he is devoted to this servant of God in this world.

Because if you look at the fact where he is mentioned, he's mentioned as following Paul with a comparatively small company. He's going with him, sailing out of Macedonia, through Macedonia into Asia and so on, and then entering Asia and going on to Jerusalem.

They're going on to Jerusalem, where Paul gets arrested. And from Jerusalem, they can't all go with him down to Caesarea, when he's in prison. So probably they went back down, they ministered to his wants, they would get the things that he needed, they'd visit him, they'd support him.

[20:16] When he goes on the ship and gets shipwrecked and so on, some of them certainly would go with him. Luke certainly would have gone with him. Others might have gone with him. If not, then once they heard that he had landed, that he was back in Rome, they would have gone to Rome too.

Definitely Tychicus is subsequently in Rome. How do we know? Because when Paul writes these letters to Philippi or to Colossae, to Ephesus, later on to Titus, to Timothy and so on, he's doing it from Rome.

He is writing from Rome. And he's sending, I'm sending Tychicus. I'm sending Tychicus probably as the bearer of that letter. To take the message, to bring the written word, and likewise to talk about

the state calls in and how he's held there and any additional message that you might have for them. He is sending Tychicus all over the place. He's sending him to Crete to see Titus or Artemis. He might send him instead, but one or the other.

He's sending him to Ephesus. He's sending him to Colossae. He's sending him wherever he needs to go because he is a reliable messenger, a reliable servant of this apostle.

[21 : 35] And he has proved himself to be. And the more experience he gains and the more experience and knowledge he builds up, the more use he will be.

The more times he does it, the better he will get at it. The more times he has done it, the more Paul will rely upon him. And likewise, the more times he proves himself to be faithful, the more faithful Paul will know that he can be.

So little by little he builds up his experience. Little by little he builds up his reliability. What is he doing? He's just going wherever he's sent. He's going wherever the call of the Lord takes him. He's going wherever Paul sends him. He's going wherever his work takes him. But wherever he's doing it, he is bringing with him in this person or perhaps in his hand a message which is not first and foremost his.

Nobody's saying, oh, here's Tychicus. Well, that's you. What Tychicus has to say? Oh, sit down and gather around in so-and-so's house. Now, Tychicus, you tell us all your news. We want to hear about you and what you've done.

[22 : 41] We want to hear about the adventures you've had. We want to hear about the gospel and your mouth and your heart. No. Oh, Tychicus is here. Oh, good. What's Paul saying? What's the apostle God for us?

Has he got a letter for us? Has he got doctrine for us? Has he got teaching for us? Has he got advice for us about the thing we wrote to him about? They want to know how they are to advance in the gospel through what Paul might teach them by means of the instrumentality of Tychicus.

That's all he is. He's a messenger. He's a key link. But he's a link nonetheless. He's not the whole chain. He's not the whole instrument.

He's not the whole machine. He is just a link in the chain. And he is the most effective. But he knows that he is simply taking a message that is not his.

He is bearing it. He is carrying it. He is transmitting it. And most of all, he is living it out. He is living it out. And he is showing in doing so that he can be relied upon.

[23 : 43] Now, other than all these, yes, diverse mentions. Yes, Ephesians, Colossians, Titus, Timothy, Acts. It's more than any of the other key links we've got. But it's still only once in each case.

It doesn't matter where we get scattered to. It doesn't matter how many places we might get sent. What matters is that we recognize the message is not ours. We're content to be in obscurity.

As long as the one that we are serving is the one who is glorified. And ultimately, Titicus isn't serving Paul. He's serving Christ. He is content to be a link in the chain. He's content to be sent wherever the Lord serves him.

He's content to travel or to remain. Now, I'm quite sure there would be part of Titicus that would love to say, Look, Paul, I'm not going off to Ephesus just now. You need me here.

You need somebody to stand with you. He said in your first answer, there was nobody there with you. Let me stay. Let me stay and let me support you. Let me be there with you. Let me do what I can.

[24 : 41] There will always be times in our hearts, and perhaps in our Christian lives, when we will wish we could be somewhere else. And we will wish perhaps we could stay when the Lord wants us to go.

Or we could go when the Lord says, No, you're not going anywhere to stand. This is where I need you. Or that is where I need you. And that, I would suggest, is for Titicus is prepared to do.

He's prepared to go on his day, wherever the Lord may require him to be. He is at the Lord's disposal. And it is precisely because he is such an efficient, reliable, quiet, diligent, faithful link in that golden chain that he is of such use in the gospel.

While his name may be quietly almost forgotten, forgotten perhaps by the church, but not forgotten by God, and not forgotten in his word.

And it might be the name of Paul that seems to be the great big name that's in the headlines.

Ultimately, it is the name of Christ who is saved. Remember what is the link between the apostles

on the one hand and the anonymous generation that follows.

[25 : 54] And now, 2,000 anonymous years later on, however many generations on that is of believers, here we are. We're not even Titicus. But we are still called to be links in the chain.

Not to do anything spectacular. Not to do anything that's beyond our ability. But just to do what we're asked to do. And to do it faithfully. To take a message that is not ours.

To take the written word in our hand. And to take the lived out word in our lives. And to convey that to whomever the Lord may send us amongst.

Whether it be workmates. Whether it be unconverted family members. Whether it be those we encounter in our daily walk. Or in our travels. Or wherever it may be. That we are to be witnesses for the Lord.

Key links in the chain. Like Titicus. And all the others. Let us pray.■45 time.

[27 : 02] 1 Probable form. Step 5 Step 5 Step 6 Step 6 Step 6 Step 7 Step 6 Step 6 Step 6 Step 10 Step 6