

Told You So

Acts Chapter 21

Act 21:1 1) Warning at Tyre vs 1-6



When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara;

Act 21:2 and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.

Act 21:3 When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo.

- Paul is traveling with a pretty good sized group. Timothy, Silas, Titus, Luke, Sopater of Berea and Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
- Paul takes a ship that stopped at every port along Asia.
- Remember that Paul wants to make Jerusalem for Pentecost. So when they get to Patara, they find a ship that is a "direct flight".

Act 21:4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

- For seven days they fellowship with a church in Tyre. There isn't an account of someone going to Tyre to start a church. This tells us the natural character of the church is to go and grow.
- These disciples told Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem. It seems that the disciples, interpreting the Spirit's Prophecy of the danger that awaits Paul, use human interpretation to tell Paul not to go. Otherwise, Paul would not have disobeyed the Spirit by going to Jerusalem.
- Acts 20:22-23 Paul knew "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me."
- This verse states "THEY kept telling Paul" while in Acts 20 Paul said "The Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me". This reinforces the point that the disciples concern was emphasized rather than the will of the Holy Spirit.

Act 21:5 When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until {we were} out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another.

Act 21:6 Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again.

- Once again we see a very tender scene. Here they only knew Paul for 7 days yet when he was leaving, all the church came to send him off. All the church including the women and children.
- "Kneeling down on the beach" - a wonderful display of affection for Jesus in public.

Act 21:7 **2) Warning at Caesarea** vs 7-14

When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day.

- They came to another city, Ptolemais, again finding Christians, they stayed with them one day.
- How wonderful at the end of a missionary journey, these men could be greeted, encouraged and refreshed by Christians every where they go.

Act 21:8 **On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.**

- The next day, Caesarea and Philip's house.
- "*One of the seven*" - Philip was one of the men who served with Stephen. Philip was there when Stephen was murdered. Philip was driven out of Jerusalem by a vicious persecutor. Now 18 - 20 years later he has this same vicious, murderer is sitting with him in his own house.
- What does forgiveness look like? How long would it take for you to be able to forgive and allow your offender in your home?

Act 21:9 **Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.**

- Here is a side comment that simply says Philip had 4 daughters who prophesied. Nothing more. Yet the comments on this small verse are astounding. All other translations (other than NASB) says who prophesied. Not necessarily an office of a prophetesses.
 - First of all nothing is said that they said anything concerning Paul's trip to Jerusalem.
 - But that fact is that they were spiritual and were gifted by the Holy Spirit for the church.
 - This speaks highly of Philip's role as a father in raising children who serve the Lord.
 - 3 Views on Women in Leadership
 - 1) **Egalitarian** - These women have equal role in the church and are leaders in Caesarea
 - 2) **Subordination** - This view holds that Luke minimizes their role. Luke questions their role and only give a mere mention of the fact. This view is reinforced by Luke's account of the silencing of the prophet girl in Acts 16 and also, here a short mention of these girls compared to the detailed account of Agabus' prophecy immediately following.
 - 3) **Liberationist** - This view attempts to acknowledge the struggle between the first two views. With the liberty of women's roles and expectations conflicting with cultural practices of the time this passage illustrates Luke's conflict with the change in process.
 - 4) **Complementarian** - Luke affirms women as equal participants in the Christian movement and yet he also clearly affirms that certain offices, like that of prophet, are limited to men only. As for the daughters of Philip, once again, Luke can affirm the fact that they prophesy, this does not mean that they serve as prophets.
 - Church History suggests that these women settled Hierapolis. Papias, a third Generation Christian and the Bishop of Hierapolis mentioned that the four daughters of Philip were of great aid to the Church in that city.

Act 21:10 **As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.**

- Acts Chapter 11 Agabus and Paul had met before. Agabus came from Jerusalem to Antioch and told of a coming famine. He was instrumental in the church gathering funds to support the brethren in Jerusalem.
- Again, Agabus shows up in Caesarea from Judea with a message.

Act 21:11 **And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' "**

- Agabus doesn't say Paul shouldn't go to Jerusalem. He tells him what it will be like.
- Notice Agabus says that "This is what the Holy Spirit says". Again we see a difference in what the Holy Spirit says and what the disciples say in verse 12.

Act 21:12 **When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents {began} begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.**

- "*Spiritual gifts like drinking water from the garden hose. It may be refreshing but it always tastes a little like the hose.*" (Focht)
- The people, again moved by their concern for Paul interpret what the intention of the Spirit is. But while they are well meaning they are wrong.

Act 21:13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Act 21:14 And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, "The will of the Lord be done!"

- Paul understood what the Holy Spirit was doing. The Holy Spirit was not trying to stop Paul. He was trying to prepare Paul
- Acts 23:11 "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."
- Paul declares his resolve to go to Jerusalem.
 - He was not persuaded by the Saints in Tyre
 - He was not persuaded by the Prophets in Caesarea
 - He was not persuaded by the dreaded second thoughts (Paul's heart could be broken? vs.13)
 - He was fully resolved on because he had heard the Lord himself. Prophecy only confirms and encourages a man in the direction he already knows.
- Are You Ready to Go Be a Christian in this World.
- Are You Ready To Die Daily for The Testimony of Jesus in You?
- Interesting that in verse 12 & 14, Luke included himself in the attempt to stop Paul when he says "we fell silent".

Act 21:15 **3) Arriving in Jerusalem** vs 15-26

After these days we got ready and started on our way up to Jerusalem.

- Going Up to Jerusalem (Always going up to the Holy City)

Act 21:16 {Some} of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.

- KJV says an "old disciple" the actual tense means not of age but long tenure.
- Was Mnason around with Jesus? Was he part of the 120 in the upper room at Pentecost?
- Saints from Caesarea joined Paul's group. It was the Feast of Pentecost one of the mandatory feasts for the Jews.

Act 21:17 After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

- Gladly is the heart of Christian Hospitality

Act 21:18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

Act 21:19 After he had greeted them, he {began} to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

- Paul with the team ("Us" verse 18) met with James and the elders to testify what has been happening among the Gentiles.
- James the Pastor of the church in Jerusalem. He is concerned for his flock and knows Paul and knows that the Jews have a tendency to get stirred up when Paul comes to town.
- Paul tells James "One by One" the things that have happened over the last 16 years.

Act 21:20 And when they heard it they {began} glorifying God;

- The leadership Accepts and glorifies God for these things. But...

and they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law;

Act 21:21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

- James is telling Paul that in Jerusalem the saints are mostly Jewish. They are Christian but they still enjoy the disciplines and ordinances of their heritage. (nothing wrong with that)
- But they have been told that Paul has been telling the Jews to forsake Moses and Jewish laws and customs. But this was a lie.
- 1 Corinthians 7:18-20 "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called."
- Paul had Timothy circumcised. (Acts 16)

Act 21:22 "What, then, is {to be done?} They will certainly hear that you have come.
Act 21:23 "Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow;
Act 21:24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

- James suggests that Paul should join four men that have decided to come under a vow. (similar to a Nazarite vow)
- James not only tells him to join them but to sponsor the men. To underwrite their vow paying their expenses.
- The church leadership is trying to keep peace in the city and not offend the Jews or the Greeks.
- James and the leadership goes on to acknowledge that they are not requiring the Greeks to keep Jewish customs. (see next verse)

Act 21:25 "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication."

Act 21:26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

- Paul agrees to these things. 1 Corinthians 9:20 "And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law."
- But there is one problem. The Gospel Offends.
- 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."
- 1 Peter 2:6-8 "For {this} is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER {stone,} AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER {stone,}" and, "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this {doom} they were also appointed."

Act 21:27 **4) A Riot and An Arrest** vs 27-40

When the seven days were almost over,

- The seven day vow for purification is just about over. Everybody should be happy and at peace with each other if the prescribed plan had worked. But remember what the Holy Spirit told Paul? Remember what Agabus prophesied?

the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, {began} to stir up all the crowd and laid hands on him,

Act 21:28 crying out, "Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people and the Law and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

Act 21:29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

- Jews from Asia see Paul in the TEMPLE. That irritates them. But then they see Trophimus in the CITY and assume Paul had brought him into the temple.
- There on the temple grounds was a wall. It was the wall of separation or wall of partition. Written in Greek and Latin was an inscription that said "No Foreigners Allowed Upon Penalty of Death"
- Ephesians 2:12-16 "you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both {groups into} one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, {which is} the Law of commandments {contained} in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, {thus} establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

- Act 21:30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.
- With only a rumor, 1) the city was provoked, 2) booted Paul out of the temple, and 3) shut the doors.
- Act 21:31 While they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the {Roman} cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.
- Act 21:32 At once he took along {some} soldiers and centurions and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.
- Paul was dragged out and was being beaten.
 - A Roman commander assigned to Jerusalem to keep peace especially at this dangerous time of Pentecost hears of the uproar and came to stop the disturbance.
- Act 21:33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he {began} asking who he was and what he had done.
- Act 21:34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing {and} some another, and when he could not find out the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks.
- To stop the disturbance the commander grabs Paul and puts him in chains. Remember Agabus' prophecy?
 - This shows wisdom on the part of the commander. This gives him:
 - Peace to the majority
 - Protects the minority (Paul)
 - Gives him time to investigate
- Act 21:35 When he got to the stairs, he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob;
- Act 21:36 for the multitude of the people kept following them, shouting, "Away with him!"
- In the exact same place, Jesus heard the same words. "Away with him." (John 19:15)
- Act 21:37 As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I say something to you?" And he *said, "Do you know Greek?"
- Act 21:38 "Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?"
- Paul asks to speak to the commander (in Greek)
 - The commander remarks that Paul speaks Greek
 - Then the commander realizes that Paul is not a rebel from a previous disturbance.
 - The assassin was of the Sikari, which means dagger. These were men that carried a dagger and the target of their plot would be approached in a crowd and the Sikari would slip the dagger out, thrust the dagger in and leave the area through the crowd and no one would know who committed the murder.
- Act 21:39 But Paul said, "I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."
- Paul asks to speak to the mob.
 - Paul identifies himself as a man from another city Tarsus.
 - In the face of his attackers, in chains of his captors Paul has one thing on his mind. He must preach the gospel.

NEXT CHAPTER

- Act 21:40 When he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
 Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
 Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)