

The Acts of the Apostles

LESSON 22

Lesson 22
Chapter 20-22

Paul Journeys through Greece (Act 20:1-6)

Paul decided to leave Ephesus for the sake of the local church (Acts 20:1). Paul always did what was most expedient for the Gospel.

Paul ministered to the believers in Macedonia (Acts 20:1-3). Paul was in the region for three months. Many feel that it was here that he most likely went to Philippi and met with Titus who briefed him on the situation at Corinth regarding the man who had sinned and now repented. As a result of this report Paul wrote the book of II Corinthians.

Paul became aware of a plot of the Jews to attempt to kill him (Acts 20:3). Paul foiled their plans by sending the main group one way while he traveled another way. The Jews would have naturally followed the larger group thinking that Paul was among them. The two groups would meet up again in Troas.

Paul was joined by Luke who travelled with him the rest of the way to Jerusalem (Acts 20:6).

Paul Ministers in Troas (Acts 20:7-12)

Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the upper room where they were gathered together. 9 And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. 10 But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, "Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. 12 And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

Paul and his traveling companions spent a week in Troas. During that time several things happened. They met with the believers on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7-12).

The Early Church seems to have been consistent in their meeting on Sunday for worship (I Cor. 16:1-2). This was most likely done for a couple of reasons. This is the day that Jesus rose from the dead (John 20:19, 26). This would help to distinguish it from Judaism (Acts 13:27, 42; 15:21).

Eutychus fell to his death during Paul's preaching (Acts 20:8-9). The notation here is that there were many lights in that place. This is to explain why Eutychus passed out. It was not Paul's dry preaching. They used kerosene lights which would create fumes when they burned. Since Eutychus was in the upper loft, he was asphyxiated and fell to his death.

Paul prayed for Eutychus and he was restored to life (Acts 20:10, 12). Paul seemed to have

followed the method of Elijah (I Kgs. 17:21) and Elisha (II Kgs. 4:33-35) in spreading himself out over the victim's body.

Paul preached until daybreak (Acts 20:11). Paul was extremely calm through this whole ordeal. He didn't want his message to be interrupted. He still had some things to say since he had the feeling that this would be his last chance to see this group of people.

Paul Travels to Miletus where he Met with the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:13-38)

Paul again was trying to evade those who wanted to kill him. He sent his companions on by ship and he proceeded on foot. They would meet in Assos where Paul would join them on the ship (Acts 20:13-14).

The full group sailed from Assos to Mitylene, to Chios, to Samos and on to Miletus. Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost. Paul still had a high regard for the Jewish feasts including Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. He loved the excitement associated with them and usually planned his trips to Jerusalem around one of the feasts (Acts 18:21).

In order to save time he decided not to stop in Ephesus but instead he sent for the leadership team from the Ephesian church to meet with him in Miletus.

This meeting that Paul had with the Ephesian elders is an important passage because it is one of the few places where we have record of an exhortation directed at an eldership team. It also reflects what Paul was sure would be his last words to them.

We cover much of this chapter throughout this course in Pastoral Ministry so we will only summarize some thoughts here that relate to Paul's trip to Jerusalem.

Paul had a negative feeling about this trip (Acts 20:22-23).

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

Paul knew that this was the last time he would see most of these men (Acts 20:25, 38).

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Acts 20:25

Paul warned them of wolves from without and from within who would try to destroy the work of God (Acts 20:29-31). Paul commended the leaders and the local church to God and the word of His grace (Acts 20:32). Paul prayed and wept with the leaders as they separated company (Acts 20:36-38).

Paul Heads for Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-14)

In this section Paul and his companions sailed by ship from Miletus to Cos, to Rhodes, to Patara until they landed at Tyre (See map). They spent a week there after which they got back on a ship and sailed to Ptolemais. They spent one day in Ptolemais and then carried on to Caesarea where they stayed with Phillip the evangelist. It was there that Agabus the prophet met up with them and gave his dramatic prophecy.

As Paul travelled to Jerusalem he had some warnings about what would happen to him there. He had a feeling in his own spirit (Acts 20:22-23).

And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

He was warned by the disciples at Tyre (Acts 21:4).

And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

He was warned by Agabus the prophet (Acts 21:10-14).

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

Paul's had an answer to these warnings. What's new? This is my lot in every city (Acts 20:23). I will not be detracted from what I feel God wants me to do.

Paul was not discouraged by the warnings but pressed on (Acts 21:14).

Question for discussion: *Was Paul in the will of God or out of the will of God to go to Jerusalem? Was the Holy Spirit trying to stop him? Or was this part of the original plan of God and God's method of getting him to Rome?*

Paul demonstrated a higher level of motivation than that of physical security. The apostles in the Book of Acts were not motivated by money or a need for physical security; they were motivated by the love of God.

The apostles were not motivated by money or temporal gain (Acts 20:33-34).

I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. Acts 20:33-34

The apostles were not motivated by a desire for physical safety or security (Acts 20:24; 21:13).

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

The apostles were motivated by the love of God (II Cor. 5:14; Phil. 1:12-18; 2:17-18). The apostles knew that God had acted in history. They knew their message was true. They knew that man's eternal destiny was dependent on their knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. They wanted to share the words of life with as many as possible (Acts 20:24).

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

Paul Meets with the Jerusalem Eldership (Acts 21:15-25)

The purpose of the meeting was to present the monetary gift that had been raised among the Gentile churches.

- They were received with gladness (Acts 21:17).
- They met with James and the elders to present the gift (Acts 21:18).
- They gave a report of the work among the Gentiles (Acts 21:19).
- The leaders of the Jerusalem church glorified the Lord for what had been done.

The leadership of the Jerusalem church had some concerns about Paul's presence in Jerusalem. They were concerned that some of the Jewish believers might not be so excited about their presence in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20-21).

This again highlights the fact that there was still not a clean separation of Judaism and Christianity in the Jerusalem church.

- The believing Jews were still practicing much of the Old Testament ritual.
- The believing Jews were still very zealous for the Law of Moses.
- The believing Jews were still not happy with what they perceived Paul to be preaching among the Gentiles.

Evidently they still believed that Paul taught that people ought not to circumcise their children and that they should not walk according to the customs established under Moses. He did not teach any of these things.

They were concerned that Paul's presence might arouse the animosity of the Jewish leaders (Acts 21:22). They were afraid that the Sanhedrin might be assembled to come against Paul and his friends. Things had been pretty quiet by now in relation to the Sanhedrin and the Jerusalem believers. The church leaders were afraid that Paul's presence would get the Sanhedrin riled up again.

The leadership of the Jerusalem church convinced Paul to participate in a vow to appease the zealous Jewish converts (Acts 21:23-24). They wanted Paul to prove himself to the zealous Jewish believers that he still has a high regard for the law. They wanted Paul to participate in the vow with four local brethren. They wanted Paul to pay for all of their expenses to let everyone know how much he believed in what he was doing.

Question for Discussion: *What is something that Paul should have done? Was he compromising his belief system to do so?*

In agreeing with this scheme, some have felt that Paul compromised himself. At the very least it seems that his wisdom was doubtful. There is no evidence that it accomplished what he intended for it to accomplish.

This incident gives us a picture into the heart of Paul. He loved the Jewish people. He loved the city of Jerusalem. He was willing to do anything to see the nation saved to the point of him being accursed (Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1). He was constantly trying to build a bridge between Jewish believers and Gentile believers. The offering that he brought with him to Jerusalem was just another attempt to do so.

They affirmed their belief that the Gentiles who had come to Christ need not practice the ceremonial aspects of the law (Acts 21:25).

Paul Arrested in the Temple (Acts 21:26-36)

The plan seemed to go well for the seven days of purification (Acts 21:26). Paul was eventually recognized by some of the Jews from out of town (Acts 21:27).

Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him...

Paul had been in many of the synagogues of Asia. Many Jews knew him from those encounters. Now they saw Paul in the temple at the feast and their rage was once again ignited against him. Those who recognized him stirred up the multitudes against him (Acts 21:27-31).

The Jews had seen what they perceived to be Gentiles in the temple and assumed that Paul had brought them in. Their holy place had been defiled by the presence of Gentiles. Therefore...

- They seized him.
- They dragged him out of the temple.

- They started beating him.

They dragged him out of the temple before they started beating him because they didn't want to defile their temple with his blood. Paul was rescued from the mob by the Roman commander by being arrested (Acts 21:31-36).

As a rule the Romans were very much against mob justice regardless of the one who was being targeted. The people were so violent that the soldiers had to carry Paul on their shoulders to escape their wrath.

Paul Addressed the Mob in Jerusalem (Acts 21:37-22:21)

Paul asked the commander in Greek if he could speak to the crowd (Acts 21:37-40). The commander was surprised that he could speak Greek. The commander had assumed he was an Egyptian insurrectionist for whom they had been looking.

“That Egyptian was probably a Jew who resided in Egypt. Josephus has given an account of this Egyptian which strikingly accords with the statement here recorded by Luke. See Josephus, Antiq., book 20, chapter 8, section 6, and Jewish Wars, book 2, chapter 13, section 5. The account which he gives is, that this Egyptian, whose name he does not mention, came from Egypt to Jerusalem, and said that he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go with him to the Mount of Olives. He said further that he would show them from thence how the walls of Jerusalem would fall down: and he promised them that he would procure for them an entrance through those walls when they were fallen down. Josephus adds (Jewish Wars) that he got together 30,000 men that were deluded by him; “these he led round about from the wilderness to the mount which was called the Mount of Olives, and was ready to break into Jerusalem by force from that place. But Felix, who was apprised of his movements, marched against him with the Roman soldiers, and defeated him, and killed 400 of them, and took 200 alive. But the Egyptian escaped himself out of the fight, but did not appear anymore.” It was natural that the Roman tribune should suppose that Paul was this Egyptian, and that his return had produced this commotion and excitement among the people.” –Barnes’ Notes

The commander gave him permission to speak. Paul addressed the mob in the Hebrew language (Acts 22:2).

And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.

He began by giving his personal testimony (Acts 22:3-17)

- He included his strong Jewish heritage (Acts 22:3).
- He included his persecution of the people of the Way (Acts 22:4-5).
- He included his miraculous conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 22:6-11).
- He included his commissioning by Ananias, a devout Jew (Acts 22:12-15).
- He included his water baptism (Acts 22:16).

- He included his return to Jerusalem (Acts 22:17).

He went on to share the instructions that he had received from the Lord while he was in Jerusalem in a time of prayer (Acts 22:17-21).

Now it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance 18 and saw Him saying to me, “Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.” 19 So I said, “Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. 20 And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.” 21 Then He said to me, “Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.”

The crowd listened attentively until he mentioned the word “Gentiles” (Acts 22:21).

Paul Declared His Roman Citizenship (Acts 22:22-29)

The crowd reacted to Paul in a dramatic way (Acts 22:22-23). They cried out against him (Acts 22:22).

Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he is not fit to live!

They tore their garments (Acts 22:23). They threw dust in the air (Acts 22:23). This was a common way of expressing indignation. In the Old Testament, Shimei expressed indignation at David by cursing him, throwing stones at him and casting dust into the air (II Sam. 16:13).

The commander wanted to find out why the crowd had reacted so violently. The commander ordered Paul to be brought to the barracks and examined under scourging (Acts 22:24).

When we think of someone being examined, we usually think of them being questioned. The word that is used here is most commonly applied to the testing of metals by fire. When it comes to examining people, it usually meant subjecting them to torture in order to get a confession of criminal behavior out of them. Paul questioned such an order on the basis of his Roman citizenship (Acts 22:25).

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?

The centurion immediately adjusted the order for scourging and investigated Paul’s claim to citizenship (Acts 22:26-29).

Then the commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” He said, “Yes.” The commander answered, “With a large sum I obtained this citizenship.” And Paul said, “But I was born a citizen.” Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. Acts 22:27-29