

Outline**I. From Miletus To Jerusalem (vv. 1-17)**

- A. *Sailed from Miletus to Tyre (vv. 1-3)*
- B. *Stayed seven days in Tyre with the disciples (vv. 4-6)*
- C. *Came to Caesarea and stayed with Philip (vv. 7-9)*
- D. *The prophet Agabus foretold of Paul's arrest and imprisonment (vv. 10-11)*
- E. *Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem anyway (vv. 12-14)*
- F. *Paul went to Jerusalem (vv. 15-17)*

II. Paul Arrested in Jerusalem (vv. 18-40)

- A. *Paul went before James and the elders (vv. 18-25)*
 - 1. Paul reported his work among the Gentles (vv. 18-19)
 - 2. James and the elders warned about the results of false rumors about him (vv. 20-22)
 - 3. James and the elders suggested that Paul take four men and observe Jewish customs to prove the rumor false (vv. 23-24)
 - 4. James and the elders restated that the law should not be bound on the Gentiles (v. 25)
- B. *Paul went into the temple (v. 26).*
- C. *The uproar (vv. 27-32)*
 - 1. Paul accused of teaching against the law and taking Gentiles into the temple (vv. 27-29).
 - 2. Paul dragged out of the temple and beaten by a mob (vv. 30-32).
- D. *Paul's arrest (vv. 33-36).*
- E. *Paul given permission to speak (vv. 37-40)*

Key Verse that Summarizes the Chapter**Acts 21:11**

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.'"

This lesson ends the third missionary journey (18-21). In the previous lesson, Paul remains in Miletus, and this chapter, chapter 21, takes him from Miletus to Jerusalem. When he arrives there, his third journey is over. He is arrested in Jerusalem, thus a new segment of his life's story begins.

From Miletus to Jerusalem (vv. 1-17)

Sailed from Miletus to Tyre (vv. 1-3). Paul and his companions sailed from Miletus to Cos¹ and stayed one night. The next day they traveled to Rhodes² and then on to Patara³. There they found a ship headed to Phoenicia. They boarded it, sailed passed Cyprus and landed at Tyre where the ship unloaded its cargo.

Stayed seven days in Tyre with the disciples (vv. 4-6). Arriving at Tyre they found disciples there and stayed for seven days. The Christians urged Paul "through the Spirit" not to go to Jerusalem.⁴ When Paul and his company departed, the brethren (including women and children) followed them to the ship where they prayed and said their farewell before parting ways.

Came to Caesarea and stayed with Philip (vv. 7-9). From Tyre they sailed to Ptolemais⁵ and stayed one day. From there they came to Caesarea where they found Philip the evangelist⁶ and stayed with him. After leaving the Eunuch, Philip came to Caesarea and apparently had been there for twenty years (Acts 8:40). He is here identified as one of the seven (cf. Acts 6:1-5). Philip had four virgin daughters that prophesied (v. 9).⁷

The prophet Agabus foretold of Paul's arrest and imprisonment (vv. 10-11). While staying in Caesarea a prophet named Agabus⁸ came from Judea. He took Paul's belt and gave a vivid demonstration of what Paul would face. Using the belt he bound his own hands and feet and said the same would be done to the man who owns the belt. He said that the Jews who bind him will turn him over to the Gentiles.

Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem anyway (vv. 12-14). Understanding what Agabus foretold, Paul's companions and the brethren from Caesarea pleaded with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Paul responded, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?"

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- 1 A small island about 40 miles south of Miletus.
 - 2 A large island in the Aegean Sea. It was about 42 miles long by 15 miles wide.
 - 3 The main seaport of Lycia.
 - 4 This simply means that they had learned what Paul would face at Jerusalem by those inspired by Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 20:22-23). Because of that, they urged Paul not to go. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit gave direction for Paul not to go and he disobeyed. On another occasion he changed his travel plans in obedience to the Spirit (Acts 16:6-8).
 - 5 Some 25-30 miles south of Tyre.
 - 6 His work as an evangelist is seen in his preaching in Samaria (Acts 8:5-12) and to the Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).
 - 7 This speaks volumes about Philip as a father. His daughters were taught and trained to be morally pure. They were led to be faithful and be used in the kingdom.
 - 8 Most likely the same man in Acts 11:28.

(v. 13). Paul was determined to go anyway – in spite of the danger. Their emotional pleas were crushing his heart. They were “weakening Paul’s determination to go on with his duty.”⁹ He was wanting to do the right thing and they were begging him not to. Paul displayed a spirit of total commitment and complete sacrifice. When the brethren saw his determination, they stopped their weeping and begging and said, “The will of the Lord be done” (v. 14).

Paul went to Jerusalem (vv. 15-17). Paul and his travel companions packed up and went to Jerusalem along with some of the brethren from Caesarea. They stayed with Mnason who was an early disciple from Cyprus. The brethren in Jerusalem received Paul with gladness when he arrived.

Paul Arrested in Jerusalem (vv. 18-40)

Paul went before James and the elders (vv. 18-25).¹⁰ The day after arriving in Jerusalem Paul met with James¹¹ and all the elders.¹² Paul reported about his work among the Gentiles (vv. 18-19). This caused the elders to praise God for the good that was done (v. 20).

The elders warned Paul about the thousands of Jews (recently converted) who were zealous for the law. These Jews had been misinformed about what Paul believed and taught. They had been told Paul taught that all Jews (among the Gentiles) were to forsake Moses, not circumcise their children, and not keep the customs of the Jews (vv. 20-21). The elders said that these Jewish brethren will surely meet for they will hear that Paul was in Jerusalem (v. 22).

They suggested Paul go with four men, who had taken a vow,¹³ be purified with them, pay the expenses when they go and shave their heads (vv. 23-24). The elders may have gotten the idea from an earlier occasion where Paul took a vow (Acts 18:18). By going into the temple and paying the expense Paul would show two things: the rumor was wrong and he kept the customs of the Jews (v. 24).¹⁴

James and the elders restated the law should not be bound on Gentiles (25). They made it clear that their advice was not against the conclusions of the Jerusalem meeting (Acts 15). Their position had not changed.

When the Law ceased, the Jews still kept many of the customs. They still could rightfully abstain from some foods (Rom. 14) and could still circumcise their children (Gal. 5:6). Paul taught that the Law of Moses ended (Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:24-25) and was no longer binding. The Jews were separated from it (Rom. 7:1-4) and no one could be saved by obeying the law (Rom. 3:20). This did not mean that one could not circumcise their child. In fact, Paul had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3). He had never taught that one could not keep the customs of the Jews.

9 A. T. Robertson, *Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft & Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press.

10 It may have been in this meeting that Paul delivered the funds he was delivering from the Gentile churches to help needy saints (Rom. 15:25-31).

11 Probably the Lord’s brother.

12 To mention James and all the elders does not suggest that he was not an elder as some suggest.

13 Most likely this was the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6).

14 “Keep the law” does not mean Paul kept the Law of Moses as if he were binding. Rather, he kept the customs of the Jews.

Paul went into the temple (v. 26). Paul followed their advice. He went into the temple to announce his intentions and the expiration of the days of purification to the priests. He didn't just tell his brethren what he believed, he showed his belief.¹⁵

The uproar (vv. 27-32). When the seven days of purification were almost ended, Jews from Asia (not the Jewish converts – vv. 20-21) stirred up the crowd. They made unfounded charges against Paul (vv. 28-29) saying he teaches against the people, against the Law, against the temple and besides all that, he brought a Gentile into the temple. This charge (about a Gentile) was based upon assumption. They had seen Paul with Trophimus and assumed he had brought him into the Temple (v. 29).

The whole city was in an uproar. They captured Paul and wanted to kill him. The news of the uproar came to the commander (identified later as Claudias Lysias, Acts 23:26; 24:7, 22) who took his men and put a stop to them beating Paul (v. 32).

Paul's arrest (vv. 33-36). The commander bound Paul with two chains, asking who Paul was and what he had done (v. 33).¹⁶ He got little or no help from the crowd since they were shouting different things (v. 34). So, Claudias Lysias had his soldiers take him (due to the violent mob) into the barracks¹⁷. As they carried him away, the mob shouted, "Away with him" (v. 36). Paul was now being held as a prisoner while determination was made about what he had done. He would remain a prisoner for the rest of the book.

Paul given permission to speak (vv. 37-40). As Paul was being led into the barracks he asked the commander, "May I speak to you?" The commander was curious about his ability to speak Greek (v. 37). Lysias immediately asked if Paul was the Egyptian revolutionary that lead a Jewish rebellion against the Roman Rulers (v. 38).

Some years before an Egyptian lead his followers (4,000 according to Lysias) into the wilderness. He had convinced them into believing that the walls of Jerusalem would fall down at his command much like Jericho's walls fell in Joshua's day. His plan was to then overpower the Roman rulers in Jerusalem. It was a disaster. However, this ring leader escaped. The commander seemed to be assuming that Paul was that leader, perhaps because he spoke Greek and the Egyptian Jews spoke Greek.

Paul pointed out that to the contrary he was from Tarsus, in Cilicia (v. 39). Paul asked for permission to address the crowd. The commander permitted him to speak. When the crowd quieted down, he began speaking in the Hebrew¹⁸ language (v.40). What he said, will be found in the next chapter.

Questions

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- 15 This is a case of "putting your money where your mouth is" like Jeremiah did in buying the field (Jer. 32) and Ezra refusing an escort (Ezra 8:22).
 - 16 He seems to be searching for the truth about Paul. He is later willing to give up his assumptions about Paul (cf. vv. 37-39). He gave permission for Paul to speak for himself (v. 40).
 - 17 "The castle of Antonia, where the guard was kept" (Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft).
 - 18 By addressing them in the Hebrew tongue, he captured their attention (cf. 22:2).

1. Who is Philip? Where have we seen him before? _____

2. What do we learn about Philip when we see he had four virgin daughters that prophesied? _____

3. What did Agabus say and how did he demonstrate it? _____

4. How were Paul's companions and other brethren breaking Paul's heart? _____

5. What was the misunderstanding that some new Jewish converts had about Paul? _____

6. How did Paul show the misunderstanding was not true? _____

7. What had Paul actually taught about the Law of Moses? _____

8. What was the point the elders were making in verse 25? _____

9. How did the mob conclude that Paul had taken a Gentile into the temple? _____

10. Who did Claudias Lysias think Paul might be? Why did he think that? _____
