

Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles to the Uttermost

Paul's third missionary Journey

"... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

Introduction: Once Paul finished his address with the Ephesian elders, Paul makes his way across the Mediterranean Sea bypassing Asia and placing himself at the port city of Tyre. It is from here he will make a few stops on his way to Jerusalem. Along the way he will be told many times by those with the prophetic gift that bonds await him in Jerusalem. His answer will be simply "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Outline:

I. The Voyage to Jerusalem v1-6

II. The Communing with the Brethren v17-26

III. The Trouble in the Temple v27-38



I. The Voyage to Jerusalem v1-16

A. The Straight Course v1-3

1. v1 The left from Miletus and travelled to Coos.
2. From there they travel to Rhodes and then on to Patara.
3. v2 *"And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth."*
4. v3 They come around the island of Cyprus and land in Tyre.
5. "Cyprus was the Kittim (Chittim) of the Old Testament mentioned in numerous prophecies (Num. 24:24; Isa 23:1,12; Jer. 2:10; Ezek. 27:6; Dan. 11:30). Perhaps those Scriptures danced for a moment through Paul's mind. In any case, Cyprus would conjure up for him more personal memories. He would think of Barnabas and Mark, of Sergius Paulus and Elymas the sorcerer. He would think of those he

led to Christ on the island on his first missionary journey, and doubtless the awakened memories would swiftly be converted into prayer.” – John Phillips

B. The Tarrying at Tyre v3-6

1. According to verse 4 we find Paul tarrying with the disciples seven days.
2. v4 It is during this time that Paul is once again warned about what awaits him at Jerusalem.
3. “It was not understood by Paul as a positive command that he should not go up to Jerusalem; for had it been, it would not have been disobeyed. He evidently understood it as expressive of their earnest wish that he should not go, as apprising him of danger, and as a kind expression in regard to his own welfare and safety.” – Albert Barnes
4. **Acts 21:13** – expresses Paul submission to the Lord Jesus Christ whatever the cost.
5. v5 Notice the common gathering to pray.
6. “...we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.”
7. You can sense the care and concern of brothers and sisters in Christ.

C. Ptolemais and Caesarea v7-16

1. Ptolemais was located about 30 miles south of Tyre a major seaport city.
2. v7 We see once again an affinity for the brethren.
3. v8 From there they travel to Caesarea, once again we see Philip the evangelist.
4. “...which was one of the seven; and abode with him.”
5. This is in reference of course to the appointment of Deacons in **Acts 6**.
6. Philip is called the evangelist. We see in **Ephesians 4** that apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers were given for the perfecting of the saints. (**Ephesians 4:11-16**)
7. v9 His four daughters it seemed were gifted with the prophetic gift.
8. Can you imagine the conversation that ensued between Philip and Paul?
9. v10-11 Agabus shows up. In Acts 11:28 he signified that there would be a dearth in all the land and here he told Paul that bonds await him in Jerusalem.
10. Agabus used a visual demonstration to tell Paul of the coming bonds. (Oftentimes prophets would ‘act out’ what was to come to pass. See **Isaiah 20:3, Jeremiah 27:2, Ezekiel 4:1**)
11. v12 It would be natural for them to want to dissuade Paul from going to a place where he may encounter danger.

12. **Matthew 16:21-23** – It is indeed a mystery to us sometimes the difficulty and dangers exposed to the Christian life and that some are bid into the most difficult situations.
- 13.v13 Paul saw their loving affection and no doubt made it very difficult. Notice the expression of Paul’s: *“What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?”*
14. *“...for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”* Paul had resolved in his mind that his life was for Jesus Christ. What an important decision for us to make, that regardless of what transpires in life that we will give our all to Him.
15. Paul knew he would be bound and apparently thought his life would be taken as well.
- 16.v14 Let this statement be our statement, *“...The will of the Lord be done.”*
17. *“It was the expression of a wish that whatever God might judge to be necessary for the advancement of his cause might take place, even though it should be attended with many trials. They commended their friend to the protection of God, confident that whatever should occur would be right.”* – Albert Barnes
18. In verse 16 we are incidentally introduced to Mnason of Cyprus. Nothing is known of this man other than the Bible tells us he was an “old disciple.” We should be reminded to take company with those who are old disciples. In their company is a wealth of spiritual wisdom.

II. The Communing with the Brethren v17-26

A. The initial reception

1. v17 *“And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.”*
2. v18 *“And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.”*

B. The following reception

1. v19 Paul begins to report perhaps where he left off in **Acts 15**. Notice he says *“...what things God had wrought among the Gentiles...”*
2. It is always good for us to remember that all that we have the ability to do has been given to us.
3. **I Corinthians 4:7** *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”*

4. v20 *“And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord...”* – It is good for us to rejoice over what is God is doing through the ministering of others. There is no room for jealousy serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.
5. *“...Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:...”* – In course they begin to give the state of the ministry there in Jerusalem. Of course, ‘many thousands of Jews’ had been saved. The work had continued since Pentecost.
6. v20 In addition, it seemed that many *“which believe...”* were also *“zealous of the law:...”*
7. Albert Barnes points out in his commentary, “in the arrangement of Divine Providence, the time was drawing near which was to destroy the temple, the city, and the nation, which was to put an end to sacrifices, and effectually to close forever the observance of the Mosaic rites.” The temple’s destruction is well noted in **AD 70** after a rebellion against Rome in **AD 66**.
8. v21 It seems that there already were reports circulating concerning Paul, that he was going beyond the decision of the Jerusalem council in **chapter 15**. The charge was, that Paul *“teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither so walk after the customs.”*
9. See how lying lips can affect the ears of all those around. The question is raised, *“What is it therefore?”* Perhaps James and the elders did not believe these reports, but many do.
10. What were Paul’s words concerning the matter? **I Corinthians 7:17 -20** *“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. **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.**”*
11. Remember one of the contentions concerning the Judaizing Christians was for Gentiles to be circumcised to be saved. (**Acts 15:1**)
12. v22 *“What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.”* – the trouble was anticipated.

C. The anticipated reception

1. **v23,24** The strong urging was to take four others and perform a vow showing that Paul was not an enemy of Moses.
2. Paul was then to pay at least in part for these four to complete their vow and purify himself. *“...purify them, and be at charges with them...”*
3. v26 Paul submitted himself to this request.
4. *“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.”* **I Corinthians 9: 19-21**
5. Matthew Henry had this to say, neither condemning the action nor commending it, **“Integrity and uprightness will be more likely to preserve us than sneaking compliances.** And when we consider what a great trouble it must needs be to James and the presbyters, in the reflection upon it, that they had by their advice brought Paul into trouble, it should be a warning to us not to press men to oblige us by doing anything contrary to their own mind.” – Matthew Henry

III. The Trouble in the Temple v27-38

A. The stirring up of the people

1. The Jews of Asia *“stirred up all the people, and laid hands on them,”*
2. They saw the opportunity to finally catch Paul.

B. The statement of these men

1. v28 *“Crying out, Men of Israel, help:...”*
2. Their charge: Paul is against the people (the Jews), Paul is against the law (and Moses), Paul is against the Temple, and Paul has polluted the Temple.

C. The supposition of these men

1. They assumed that Paul had taken Trophimus (a Gentile Ephesian) into the Temple.
2. **Nowhere is it recorded that he actually did this.**

D. The sentence of the mob

1. Division is one of Satan's primary tools in the life of the local New Testament church.
2. **Ephesians 4:1-6**
3. **Colossians 3:12,13**
4. **Psalm 133:1** *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"*
5. **I Corinthians 1:10** *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."*
6. **Romans 12:15-17** *"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."*
7. **Speaking of the separation of Jews and Gentiles Ephesians 2:14** *"For he is our peace, **who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;**"*
8. v30 *"And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut."*

E. The Soldiers that took him

1. v31 *"And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. **Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them:** and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul."*
2. This fortress Antonia was situated with an adjoining staircase directly into the Temple courtyard for the purposes of keeping peace.
3. "In this castle a guard of Roman soldiers was stationed to secure the temple and to maintain the peace." – Albert Barnes
4. This fortress was built by John Hyrcanus and later by King Herod the Great during ~37-35 BC according to Josephus. Imagine if this fortress did not exist, would Paul have survived?
5. v32 Notice they *"...left off beating..."* him.

6. Then we find in verse 33 the implication of guilt. The chief captain “...*demanded who he was, and what he had done.*” He surmised something having to do with Paul incited the mob.

F. The substantial confusion of the mob

1. v34 “*And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude...*”
2. The mob did not even know what they were accusing Paul of, some said one thing some said another.
3. Unlike this mob, God makes himself very clear when it comes to His judgment. There is a vast difference between the deceitfulness of the Adversary and the clarity of our God.
4. **James 3:16** “*For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*” – When it comes to God’s people, the Lord does not lead us down the path of confusion. (**I Corinthians 14:33**)
5. **Psalm 71:1** “*In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.*” – Sin oftentimes leads to confusion.
6. v35 Paul was not mildly beaten but rather had to be “*borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.*”

G. The speech of Paul

1. v37 The **assumption** of the Captain – “*Canst thou speak Greek?*”
2. This Roman Captain, was not a Roman by birth according **Acts 22:28**.
3. v38 Paul was assumed to be “*that Egyptian which before these days madest an uproar...*”
4. The **answer** of Paul
5. v39 Paul gives a description of his heritage and place of birth. He was a Jew. He was from Tarsus of Cilicia.
6. The **affection** of Paul
7. v40 “*Paul stood on the stairs and beckoned with the hand unto the people.*”