

# **“Paul’s Final Trip To Jerusalem”**

## **Acts 21:1-25**

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**Teaching Aim:** To explore the circumstances surrounding Paul’s final trip to Jerusalem. To recognize the warnings that were given to Paul about his coming persecution in Jerusalem. To realize the concern Paul’s friends had for his safety and to see the determination Paul had to follow the will of God in his life, no matter what the cost to him personally. To understand the importance of every Christian putting the Lord’s will in their lives first.

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)**

#### **Part I: Warnings of Paul’s coming persecution in Jerusalem (Acts 21:1-14)**

1. As we come to **Acts chapter 21**, we find Paul working his way from port to port in the northwestern Mediterranean Sea as he headed towards Jerusalem with the goal of being there before Pentecost. What two ports did Paul stop at in **verse 1**? Note: Up to this point Paul had been sailing on smaller ships, but now he had to find a much larger ship for the trip to Phoenicia and the city of Tyre.
2. What notable Bible character was born on the Island of Cyprus? (See **Acts 4:36**) On which side of the island did Paul’s ship pass (**vs. 3**). What did the crew of the ship do immediately?
3. Who did Paul look for following his arrival in Tyre (**vs. 4**)? How do many believe the early church was established there? (See **Acts 8:1-4; 11:19**) Does it seem odd to you that this church may have been in Tyre partly because of the persecution of young Saul, who was now known as Paul? How long did Paul stay in Tyre? Did he make the wrong decision by continuing on to Jerusalem when he had been forewarned of the danger there? Why or why not? (See **Acts 20:24; 23:11**) Note: By the words of Jesus, it appears Paul’s going to Jerusalem was part of God’s plan to get Paul to Rome.
4. It appears it didn’t take the Apostle Paul long to make many friends in Tyre. How did the believers respond as Paul was preparing to get back on the ship (**vs. 5**)? Why should prayer be an essential practice for every Christian? What are the different postures that people use while praying? What is your favorite posture to pray? Why do you like praying this way?

5. Luke was the writer of *"The Book of Acts."* What can we learn from Luke's use of the word "we" in **verse 6**? How did the rest of the believers react once Paul had prayed with them, and Paul's party boarded the ship? Where did this longest leg of Paul's Mediterranean voyage end? What modern country is this city located in today? What did Paul do once he had traveled another 25 miles or so south from Tyre to Ptolemais (**vs. 7**)? Why did Paul always look for the church every time he traveled to a new city? Is that something we should still be doing as we travel from place to place? Why?
  
6. Caesarea was the major port for Israel, it was the seat of the Roman government and their providential capital in Judea (**vs. 8**). What can we learn about Caesarea Maritima from doing a little research online? At whose house did Paul and his team stay while at Caesarea (**vs. 8b**)? Who was this individual and why is he so important in the Bible? (See **Acts 6:1-6; 8:4-13, 26-40**) Note: Some believe the early church in Caesarea met in this man's house. This is also the only individual in Scripture who was called "*the evangelist*," though Timothy comes close to being called that in **2 Tim. 4:5**. What does this title tell us about Philip?
  
7. What can we learn about Philip and his family from **Acts 21:8-9**? What is a prophetess? What was their role in the early church? Who appeared in Philippi while Paul and his team were staying at the house of Philip (**vs. 10**)? What do we find this man doing 15 years earlier in **Acts 11:27-30**? What kind of warning did this man give to Paul in **verse 11**? What are some of the stranger ways that prophets in the Old Testament have had to act out their prophecies? (See **Isa. 20:1-4; Ezek. 4:1-17**)
  
8. How did Luke and his companions react to the prophecy from Agabus (**vs. 12**)? Why do you think they reacted this way? What were they concerned about? It is important to note that the Holy Spirit did not forbid Paul from going to Jerusalem, He simply warned him of the coming danger. How did the pleas of Paul's friends affect him (**vs. 13**)?
  
9. How determined was Paul to continue his journey to Jerusalem despite the danger (**vs. 14**)? What conclusion did Luke and the others come to? Why is it important for us to be willing to follow the will of the God in our lives, no matter what the cost to us personally?

## Part II: Paul's arrival at Jerusalem and his meeting with James and the elders (Acts 21:15-19)

1. Following their time at Caesarea Maritima, what did Paul's associates decide to do (**vs. 15**)? It is notable that Paul's traveling companions refused to leave Paul's side, even if it meant putting their own lives in danger. What can we learn from **Prov. 17:17**? Do you have any brothers or sisters in Christ whom you are close to?
2. Paul's time was quickly running out if he wanted to reach Jerusalem by the time of Pentecost. Paul still had 62 miles to travel on foot climbing to an elevation of 2,400 feet above sea level if he were to make it there in time. Whose house did Paul and his companions stay at as they traveled to Jerusalem (**vs. 16**)? What can we learn about this man from **verse 16**? Is it possible that he was one of the original 120 believers? (See **Acts 1:15**) Why do many commentators believe that he was?
3. Who did Paul and the believers with him immediately look for once they arrived in Jerusalem (**vs. 17**)? How were they received by the leadership of the early church? John MacArthur adds, *"This was because of the much-needed offering they brought. Also, and more importantly, the Jerusalem believers rejoiced because the Gentile converts with Paul provided visible evidence of God's work of salvation in the Roman world."*
4. Who did Paul meet with on the following day (**vs. 18**)? Note: James, the half-brother of Jesus, seemed to have risen to the position of leader in the Jerusalem church. He additionally worked closely with the apostles and elders there. What can we learn about James and his role in leadership from Paul's letter to the Galatians? (See **Gal. 1:19; 2:9-10**)
5. In **verse 19**, Paul gave an update to the church in Jerusalem on his recent missionary journeys in Asia-Minor and Greece. Why is it important for churches to encourage their missionaries to still give missionary reports today? Paul very likely turned the offering that he had collected for the poor over to James at this time. What can we learn about Paul's method of collecting this offering from **1 Cor. 16:1-4**?

### Part III: An attempt to appease the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20-25)

1. As we come to **verse 20**, the city of Jerusalem was filled with zealous Jews desiring to celebrate Pentecost; this feast was also known as, "*the Feast of Weeks*." What was the significance of Pentecost to the Jews? (See **Exod. 19 & 20**) What is the significance of Pentecost to modern Christians today? (See **Acts 2:1-13**)
2. Sadly, the Jews from Asia-Minor had been slandering Paul around the city. What is the definition of the word, "*slander*?" (See Dictionary) What charges were they making against Paul (**vv. 21-22**)? The truth is, what Paul was opposed to was any attempt to make the law of Moses necessary for salvation instead of God's grace. What led the Apostle Paul to forbidding the Gentile Titus from being circumcised in **Gal. 2:3**? According to Paul, what will happen if people choose to follow the Old Testament law in an attempt to find salvation? (See **Gal. 5:1-6**) What can we learn about the law from **Col. 2:13-17** and **Gal. 3:24**?
3. Paul was willing to submit to Jewish practices so long as they did not violate the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The elders then made a feeble attempt at keeping the peace in Jerusalem. What plan did the elders come up with in an attempt to appease the Jews who were slandering Paul (**vv. 23-24**)? What kind of vow had the four men taken and were now completing? (See **Num. 6:1-21**) Why did the elders think that this plan might work?
4. How did Paul respond to the request from James and the elders (**vv. 23-24**)? Note: Paul was willing to be all things to all people so long as it did not involve compromising the essential truths of the Christian faith. (See **1 Cor. 9:19-23**) The same should be true for every Christian today. Additionally, Paul hoped to unify the Jewish and Gentile believers together into one body, the Church. As Augustine put it, "*In the essentials, unity. In the non-essentials, liberty. In everything else, charity.*"
5. What standards did James and the elders in Jerusalem hold the Gentiles to (**vs. 25**)? Does their direction in **Acts 21:25** deny or affirm the decision made earlier at the Jerusalem Council in **Acts 15:28-29**?

6. Paul was not observing the law in order to be saved, he was observing some of the practices of the law because he had the liberty in Christ to do so. What can we learn about salvation from the following Bible verses? (See **Rom. 3:21-31; Gal. 3:23-29**)
  
7. Have you repented from your sin and received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so in prayer right now?

**MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- The Holy Spirit, through God's people, warned Paul of the coming danger in Jerusalem.
- Philip the evangelist was the same Philip who was one of the seven chosen in **Acts 6:3-6**.
- Philip's four daughters had the gift of prophecy and were prophetesses.
- Agabus was a prophet used twice by God in the Book of Acts to give warnings of difficult times ahead. (See **Acts 11:27-30; 21:10-13**).
- Paul was determined to follow the will of God in his life, no matter what the cost.
- James, the half-brother of Jesus, had risen to the position of leadership in the church at Jerusalem.
- The early church was united in their desire to reach both Jews and Gentiles for Christ.
- When other believers succeed in ministry, we should glorify God for their success.
- We should do our best to keep our brothers and sisters from stumbling in their faith.