

12/16/07

Acts 21

The meeting of Paul with the Ephesian elders has ended, all have wept because they would see his face no more and now they accompany him to the ship.

The apostle Paul after three years of ministry at Ephesus now returns to deliver the gift from the Gentiles, to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

He knows God wants him to go to Jerusalem and then Rome but know nothing about the specific sufferings he will go through but God will warn him along the way to prepare him for all things.

21:1-14 The journey from Melitus to Caesarea.

21:1-6 *They sailed from Melitus to Tyre.*

21:1 The departure from the Ephesian elders.

- 1) They departed “apospasthentas” means to tear apart and is the passive participle, suggesting emotional turmoil in departing.

* Literally, tore ourselves from them, showing the painful separation through emotional reluctance.

- 2) They sail straight to the small Island of Cos, 40 miles south of Melitus.
 - a) There the temple of Aesculapis was erected, the god of healing.
 - b) A school of medicine was founded there by Hippocrates, the father of medical science, in the 5th Century.
 - c) The Hippocratic oath is still required to be taken by all physicians.
- 3) The next day they came to Rhodes, which had been a powerful rich city state in the past, located 80 miles from Cos.
 - a) It was famous for the Colossus of Rhodes, a gigantic bronze statue, 105 feet high, of the sun-god Apollo.
 - b) The legs of the statue once spanned the entrance of the harbor, one of the seven wonder of the world but already in ruins n Paul’s day.
- 4) From there they went to Patera, a Lycian city, 70 miles from Rhodes, on the southwest coast of Asia Minor, a large commercial city with a fine harbor, for large ships traveling between the eastern Mediterranean ports of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, the Aegean ports in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

21:2-3 The long journey to Tyre.

- 1) They boarded a ship at Patara to Phoenicia, traveling 400 miles south-east. vs. 2
- 2) They sighted “anaphaino” Cyprus a nautical term, to bring to light, discover or appear, they did not stop. vs. 3a-c
* The word is found only two times in the New Testament. Lk. 19:11
- 3) They landed at Tyre, where the merchant ship delivered her cargo. vs. 3d-e
 - a) This was the southern side of the Island where the city was built, but it use to have two harbors, one on the coast and one on the Island but now it was joined by to the mainland by the cause-way built by Alexander the Great, making it a peninsula.
 - b) Jesus preached to a woman of Syrophencia as she revealed her hunger for the things of God.

21:4 The visitation with some disciples.

- 1) They stayed with some disciples for seven days. vs. 4a-b
 - a) Disciple has the definite article, indicating Christians he knew prior. Acts 11:19
 - b) The word finding “aneurislo” means to find by searching out.

- 2) They warned Paul through the Holy Spirit about the sufferings at Jerusalem. vs. 4c
 - a) Paul already knew his call to sufferings. Acts 9:16-17
 - b) Paul told the Ephesian elders of constant warnings by the Spirit but not to keep him from going but to prepare him in going! Acts 20:23-24
 - c) When the Holy Spirit did not want Paul to go and preach, He was very clear as in the regions of Galatia, Mysia and Bythinia. Acts 16:6-7

21:5-6 The departure from Tyre.

- 1) The phrase “When we had come to the end of those days” refers to they having spent many day in completion of their waiting for the ship unloading its cargo.
- 2) The disciples and their wives and children accompanied Paul and his companions, till they were out the city. vs. 5a-e
* This is the first time children are mentioned with the church in Acts.
- 3) They knelt and prayed at the shore. vs. 5f
- 4) Paul, Luke and the others boarded the same ship, indicted by the definite article, and they returned to their homes. vs. 6

21:7 The journey to Ptolemais.

- 1) The word finished “dianuo” means to accomplish thoroughly, perhaps indicative of being on schedule, appearing only one time in the N. T.
- 2) Ptolemais was 25 miles south of Tyre.
 - a) The name dates back to the Ptolemy II of Egypt, 285-246 B.C.
 - b) Today it is known as Acre, famous in the days of the Crusaders.
- 3) Paul greeted some believers and stay one day.

21:8-9 The journey to Caesarea.

- 1) They traveled 35 miles more to Caesarea, one day. vs. 8a
 - * We know that Caesarea was the seat of Roman government in Judea at all times.
- 2) Paul visited Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven. vs. 8b-c
 - a) One of the seven refers to the seven deacons to care for the Hellenistic widow. Acts 6:1-7
 - b) He is the only one called an evangelist in scripture,
 - c) He went to Samaria and evangelized them and preached to the Ethiopian eunuch 20 or so years earlier. Acts 8
 - d) The office of evangelist is only mentioned in Ephesians. Eph. 4:11

- e) Paul exhorts Timothy to do the work of an evangelist. 2Tim. 4:5
- 3) Paul stayed with Philip which must of stirred up some interesting conversation of the last 20 years since Paul’s conversion. vs. 8d
- 4) He had four virgins daughters who were gifted in the gift of prophecy. vs. 9
 - a) The text does not say they were prophetesses.
 - b) They had the gift of prophecy, in fulfillment of Joel. Joel. 2:28; Acts 2:17

21:10-11 The prophecy of Agabus.

- 1) After many days the Prophet Agabus came down from Judea. vs. 10
 - * He had prophesied about the famine in the land. Acts 11:27-28
- 2) He took Paul’s belt and bound his hands and feet declaring that Paul would be bound at Jerusalem and delivered to the Gentiles. vs. 11
 - a) Agabus like the Prophets of old delivered a prophecy by acting it out.
 - b) Ahijah tore Jeroboam’s cloak into 12 pieces and Isaiah went naked and bare-footed. 1Kings 11:29-39; Is. 20:2-4

21:12-14 The response of those hearing the prophecy.

- 1) Luke and the others pleaded repeatedly with Paul not to go to Jerusalem. vs. 12
 - a) At times well intended people fear for the individual because they are close to him or her but the person must obey the Lord.
 - b) Once again I believe these are warnings to Paul in preparation for the sufferings not commands prohibiting him from going up!
 - * Luther was told by many not to go to Rome but God sent him!
- 2) Paul provided the evidence that God was warning Paul, not a commanding him not to go to Jerusalem. vs. 13
 - a) He was not in agreement with them, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?" vs. 13a-b
 - * The word breaking "sunthrupto" means crushing together, appearing only this time in the New Testament.
 - b) He was ready to be bound and die if need be, being emphatic in the Greek. vs. 13c-d
 - c) Paul was going to Jerusalem and then to Rome, being Spirit bound and directed and prepared for the difficult journey. Acts 19:11, 20:22-24

- d) Like his Master, Jesus, Paul is walking towards Jerusalem despite the suffering that awaited him!
- 3) Paul caused them to except the will of the Lord over theirs, understanding it was the will of the Lord. vs. 14
 - a) They became silent, ceasing their efforts to dissuade Paul..
 - b) Paul was revealed by the Holy Spirit that he would see Rome. Acts 19:21

21:15-26 The journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

21:15 The preparation for the trip.

- 1) The number of day is not given, simple "after those days".
- 2) They all packed and headed for Jerusalem.
 - a) The word packed "aposkeuazo", the aorist participle means made our preparations for the 65 mile journey.
 - b) The necessary food and water, etc.
 - c) They would be ascending 2,500 feet, up to Jerusalem.
 - * You always "go up" to Jerusalem from any vantage point!

21:16 The companions on the trip.

- 1) Disciples from Caesarea escorted Paul and the others.

- 2) Manson of Cyprus, who was an early disciple, who they were to lodge with.
- a) The word early is “archaios”, we get our archaic, which means original, ancient, therefore possible one of the 120 of the day of Pentecost.
 - b) Some say the lodging indicates prior to Jerusalem, as expressed in the Codex Bezae but our text clearly says the lodging would be in Jerusalem.

21:17 The reception at Jerusalem.

- 1) The brethren were the Hebrew believers.
- 2) The arrival was met with gladness, those eight Gentiles having accompanied Paul and Luke from Corinth. Acts 20:4
 - a) Receiving us gladly is a doubly emphatic in the Greek.
 - b) The gift of love from the gentile churches was evidence of their oneness in Christ, being Jew and Gentiles.
 - * Though not mentioned here, it is later. Acts 24:17
 - c) The gift was evidence of their love for the Jews believers in the body of Christ.
 - d) The population was no less than two million people in Jerusalem at Pentecost.

21:18-22 The meeting at Jerusalem.

- 1) Paul and the others went to meet with James and the elders. vs. 18
 - a) James was the Lord’s half brother and a non-believer before the resurrection.
 - b) James was the leading elder of the church at Jerusalem, evident by the First church council. Acts 15:13-20
 - c) The pronoun “us” ends the section marking the presence of Luke until chapter 27.
 - * Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16
- 2) Paul told of the details of the work of God among the Gentiles through his ministry. vs. 19
 - * This was at least the fourth meeting with James. Acts 9:27-28; 15:13; Gal. 1:18-19; 2:1, 9
- 3) The response of James and the elders. vs. 20
 - a) They glorified the Lord. vs. 20a-b
 - b) They pointed out the myriads, literally tens of thousand of Jews Christians and were zealous for the law, meaning to boil. vs. 20c-f
 - * Whenever tradition or any other practice opposes Scripture, it must go not the word of God!
- 4) Paul was being accused of teaching to forsake, to apostasy, from Moses law,

specifically the custom of circumcision.
vs. 21

- a) The word informed “katecheo” infers oral instruction, we get our English word “catechize” from it.
 - b) This was the work of the Judaizers, who falsely accused Paul constantly.
 - c) They were saying Paul was teaching them to forsake “apostasia”, to apostasy from the Mosaic Law.
 - d) Paul clearly did not forbid any Jew from being circumcised or follow traditions, unless they attempted to teach them as substitute for salvation in the finished work of Jesus Rom. 2; Gal. 2-3; 4:9; 5:6, 11; Col. 2
 - e) Paul became all things to all men, that he might win some. 1Cor. 9:20
 - f) He circumcised Timothy being a Jew but he didn’t circumcise Titus as requested by the Jews to be a Christian! Acts 16:3
 - * “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the mutilation! For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh”, Phil. 3:2-3
- 5) The assembly would surly come knowing Paul was present. vs. 22

- a) They would want to confront him.
- b) The would want to hear his defense.

21:23-25 The council given to Paul by James and the elders.

- 1) The plan to sponsor the four young men who had taken a vow was theirs not Paul’s or God’s, “Therefore do what we tell you”. vs. 23
 - a) The Nazarite vow was for 30 days. Num. 6:1-21
 - b) Paul had shaved his head at the Corinth seaport of Cenchrea, indicating such vow was over. Acts 18:18
- 2) The intent was to show the Jews that Paul practiced the law himself. vs. 24
 - a) The instructions, “Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads”. vs. 24a-b
 - * Paul was merely sponsoring them for the seven days, they were shaving their heads, not Paul!
 - b) The purpose, “And that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing”. vs. 24c
 - c) The personal witness, “But that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law”. vs. 24d

* The word orderly “stoicheo” means rank, row, series, to walk in line or by rule, as the march of a soldier.
vs. 25

- 3) The reminder of the decree of the First church council. vs. 25
 - a) The individuals involving the decree, “But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing”. vs. 25a-b
 - b) The individual guide lines, “Except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality”. vs. 25c-d

21:26 The execution of the Nazarite vow executed by the four men.

- 1) Paul took the men the next day, after they had been purified. vs. 26a-c
- 2) Paul entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification. vs. 26d
- 3) Paul and the young men would at that time offer an offering. vs. 26e

21:27-36 **The riot and arrest of Paul in the Temple.**

21:27-30 *The hatred of Paul.*

21:27 The instigators of the riot.

- 1) The time period was seven days of purification when they would burn their hair and the eighth offer the sacrifice. vs. 27a
- 2) The Jews from Asia seeing Paul in the temple stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him. vs. 27b-d
 - a) They perhaps the very ones from Ephesus?
 - b) Paul mentions Alexander the coppersmith who did him much harm. 2Tim. 4:14

21:28 The false accusations.

- 1) They cried out for help, to all in the temple. vs. 18a-c
- 2) They said Paul taught against the people, the law and the temple. vs. 28d-f
- 3) They said Paul brought Greeks into the Temple and defiled it. vs. 28g
 - a) This must of reminded Paul of the false charges against Stephen and his condoning of his being stoning!
 - b) A sign was posted between the court of the women read that no man could enter in without the sentence of death, in Greek and Latin.

21:29 The commentary by Luke.

- 1) They jumped to conclusions having seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city. vs. 29a
- 2) They therefore concluded Paul had brought him into the temple area. vs. 29b

21:30 The response of the Jews in the temple.

- 1) All the city was disturbed and the people ran together and seized Paul in the inner court of the temple. vs. 30a-b
- 2) They dragged him out of the inner court of the temple, to the court of the Gentiles. vs. 30c
- 3) They shut the doors of the inner court of the temple, to prevent any defilement. vs. 30d

21:31-36 *The rescue of Paul.*

21:31-32 The Roman commander was informed of the disturbance.

- 1) They were seeking to kill Paul. vs. 31a
- 2) The news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. vs. 31b
 - a) The Fortress of Antonia was built by Herod the Great to overlook the temple area to the south and the city to the north and the west, with exists

to both the Court of the Gentiles and the city proper.

- b) Garrison “speira” means a cohort, 1000 men stationed, being feast season.
- 3) He immediately took soldiers and centurions, officers over 100 men and ran down to them. vs. 32a-b
 - * The Roman soldiers were responsible for the peace of the city, particularly during the Feast days, when the city swelled to an incredible number, lending itself to riots or revolts.
- 6) The crowd seeing them stopped beating Paul. vs. 32c-d

21:33-34 The commander took custody of Paul.

- 1) The commander took Paul and had him bound with two chains. vs. 33a-b
- 2) The commander and questioned Paul, as to who he was and what he had done. vs. 33c
- 3) The confusion of the crowd shouting different things made it difficult for the commander to come to grips with the truth of the matter. vs. 34a-b
- 4) The commander had Paul taken into the barracks. vs. 34c

21:35-36 The dangerous situation.

- 1) Paul had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violent crowd. vs. 35
- 2) The multitude followed the soldiers, who carried Paul, shouting their hate of Paul, "Away with him". vs. 36
 - a) The present participle with the verb in the imperfect, implying to execution.
 - b) The very same word utter for Jesus. Lk. 23:18; Jn. 19:15
 - c) The crowd was no different than the Ephesian crowd over their love for Diana, only theirs was the law.
 - d) Where was James and the elder of Jerusalem, they neither came to Paul's rescue nor the years he would spend in prison in Caesarea.
 - e) The Lord Jesus would used that time for Paul to write the prison epistles", Philippians, Ephesian, Colossians and Philemon.

21:37-40 The petition of Paul to speak to the crowd.

- 21:37** The petition came as Paul was being led away.
- 1) The soldiers were leading Paul to the barracks. vs. 37a
 - 2) The apostle asked the commander to speak with him. vs. 37bb-c

- 3) The commander was surprised he could speak Greek. vs. 37d-e

21:38-39 The commanders preconceived understanding of Paul's identity.

- 1) The commander thought Paul to be a certain Egyptian who had led a rebellion.
 - a) The reference to assassins "sikarion" is to a band of fanatical murderers who roamed the streets among the crowds with daggers and killed whoever they pleased.
 - b) The word in the Latin "sicarius" from the short curved dagger "sica", bandits terrorist who hated the Romans and Roman sympathizers, they infiltrated the crowds close and stave their victim.
 - c) Barclay tells us that about 54 A.D. this man led a group of men in rebellion to Rome to the mount of Olives promising that he walls would fall down.
- 2) Paul denied the charge and identified himself to the commander. vs. 39
 - a) Paul declared he was a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a city of wealth and intellectual recognition by it Universities, a Roman citizen. vs. 39a-d

- b) Paul asked permission to speak to the crowd. vs. 39e-f

21:40 The apostle Paul addressed the crowd.

- 1) Paul received permission to speak. vs. 40a
- 2) Paul stood on the stairs and motioned with his hand to the people. vs. 40b
 - a) This Paul's first defense before the crowd. Acts 22:1
 - b) The second before the Jewish council in Jerusalem. Acts 23:1
 - c) The third, before Felix, at Caesarea. Acts 24:1
 - d) The fourth, before Festus, also at Caesarea. Acts 25:1
 - e) The fifth, before King Herod Agrippa II, also at Caesarea. Acts 26:1
 - * Six chapters, a total of 200 verses are dedicated to the apostle's defense of fulfilling his commission, as the apostle of the Gentiles.
- 3) And when there was great silence, he spoke to the in the Hebrew language. vs. 40c-e
 - a) The word language is "dialektos" probably Aramaic.
 - b) The speech of Paul runs till the 21 verse of the next chapter.

- c) The chapter division would be better if chapter 21 finished with verse 39 and chapter 22 began with verse 40.
- d) Some interesting parallels have been pointed out by commentators between Paul and Jesus.
 - 1)) Both were rejected by their own people, arrested without a cause, and imprisoned.
 - 2) Both were unjustly accused and willfully misrepresented by false witnesses.
 - 3)) Both were slapped in the face in court. Acts 23:2
 - 4)) Both were the helpless victims of secret Jewish plots, in God's sovereign will. Acts 23:12
 - 5)) Both heard the terrifying noise of a frenzied mob screaming "Away with him". Acts 21:36
 - 6)) Both were subject to a series of five trials; Jesus by Annas, the Sanherdrin, King Herod Antipas and twice by Pilate; Paul by the crowd, the Sanhedrin, King Herod Agrippa II and by the two procurators, Felix and Fesstus.