

Introduction

Third Journey



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In this passage we find Paul and his friends departing from Miletus where they had rendezvoused with the elders from Ephesus, and making their journey back to Jerusalem. Paul was in a bit of a rush as he was determined to be in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost (20:16). In his company are the men mentioned in 20:4 along with Luke.

I. Paul's Company Departs from Miletus (vs. 1 – 3)

"And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:" (Acts 21:1)

Paul must literally tear away from his friends at Ephesus. The word for “were gotten” is ἀποσπάω (ä-po-spä'-ō), which means to tear away. They love him, they will miss him, and they are very concerned for his safety at Jerusalem.

"And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden." (Acts 21:2-3)

They take a day each to sail to Coos, Rhodes, and Patara; but once they get to Patara they find a ship that is going across the Sea, directly to Tyre, without stopping at Cyprus. This will expedite their trip. This was probably a larger vessel than the ones that stay close to the shoreline going from port to port. From Patara to Tyre is a journey of approximately 400 miles.

II. Paul's Friends Attempt to Dissuade Him from a Mistake (vs 4 – 12)

A. The Saints at Tyre (vs. 4 – 6)

"And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again." (Acts 21:4-6)

This was the first of two warnings that Paul received from the Holy Ghost through his friends. Some have argued that it was God's will for Paul to travel to Jerusalem, but He just wanted Paul to be aware of the tragedy that he would face there. Although I am certainly in the minority opinion, I do not think that God wanted him to go. I don't see anywhere in the Scriptures where God told Paul to go. I know that he wanted to go, and for all good reasons, but I am not convinced it was the will of God.

Note – Sometimes the “good things” that we want to do are not the will of God for us. Sometimes the good people that we want to date or marry are not the perfect will of God for us.

B. The Saints at Caesarea (vs. 7 – 12)

"And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day." (Acts 21:7)

They spend a day at Ptolemais, and then continue south to Caesarea.

"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." (Acts 21:8-9)

They lodge for many days with Philip the Evangelist. This is the same Philip that was selected to help with the daily ministration in Acts 6; and he is the same one who lead a great revival in Samaria, and later witnessed to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. We find him travelling to Azotus, and then to Caesarea in Acts 8:40 (see map next page), which is where he is in Acts 21.

You will notice that this man had 4 unmarried daughters who "prophesied."

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"
(Acts 2:16-17)

While in Caesarea, an old friend visits.

"And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:10-12)

This is the same man that visited the church at Antioch in Acts 11:27

"And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar." (Acts 11:27-28)

Agabus used Paul's girdle to illustrate what would happen to him. A girdle in this case is a belt. This is Paul's second warning.

Also see Acts 22:17 – 21 - for the third warning from the Lord.

III. Paul's Determination to Continue His Mission (vs 13 – 17)

"Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. And after those

days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly." (Acts 21:13-17)

Paul loves the Jewish people:

*"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
(Romans 10:1)*

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:" (Romans 9:1-3)

He had already written his letter to the Romans, and in the letter, he stated that Israel was blind to the gospel. (Romans 11:25) Paul was determined to help them see. If any man on earth could convince them, it would have been Paul. He was one of them. He at one time had a passionate hatred for Christianity as they did; but it wasn't man who convinced Paul, it was God. God had to take Paul's blinders off, and it will have to be God who will remove the blinders from the Jewish people.

Why was Paul Imprisoned?

A. Because of His Passion

Paul had a passion for the people of Israel. He wanted to reach them more than anything else.

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B. Because of His Persistence

1. Warned by his History (Acts 20:22 & 23)
2. Warned by Disciples of Tyre (Acts 21:4)
3. Warned by Agabus (Acts 21:10 – 12)

