

Woodland Baptist Church
April 23, 2013 - Wednesday Night in the Word
Acts 21:1-16 On to Jerusalem

1) OPENING REMARKS

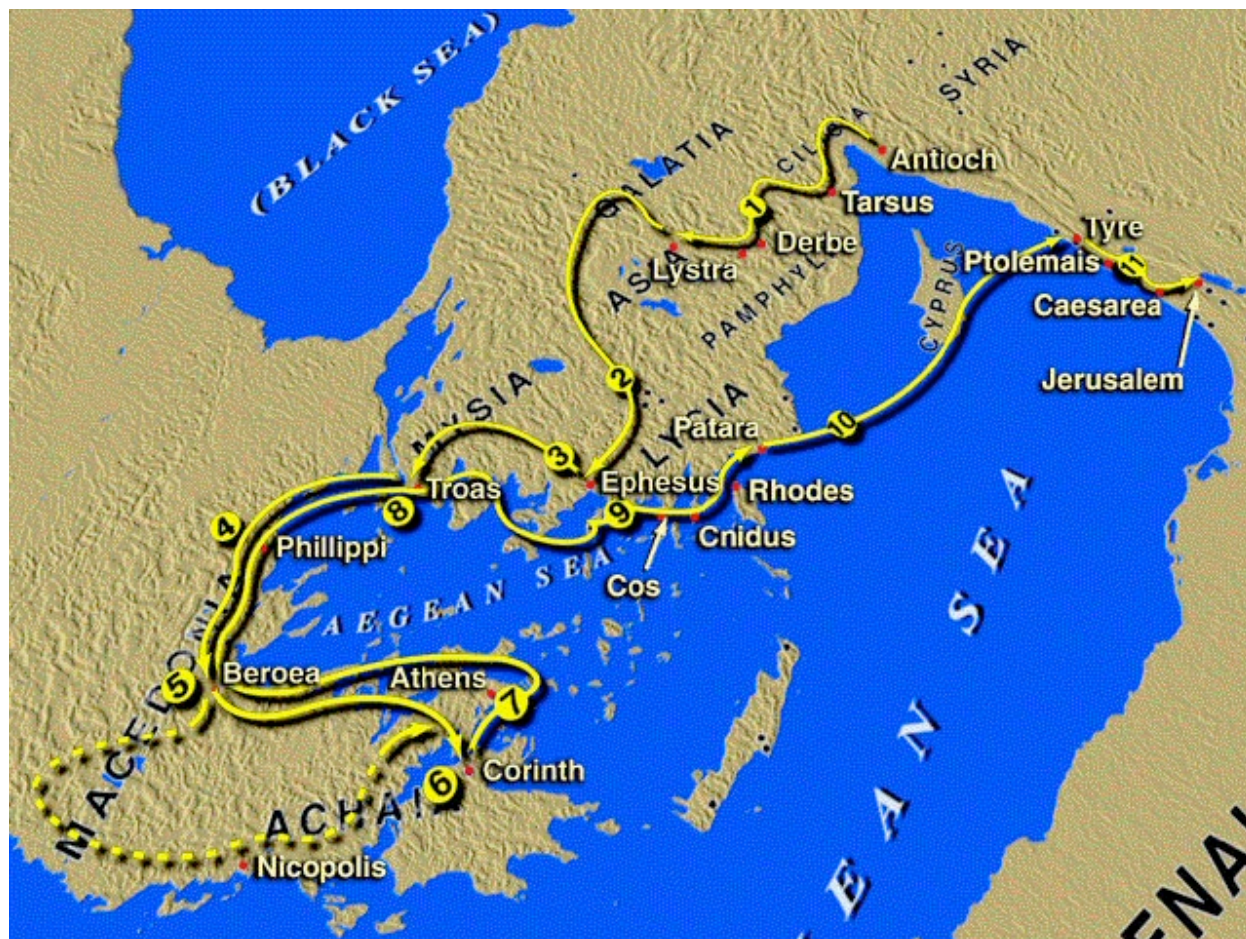
- a) The third "we" section of Acts (21:1-18) is of theological importance because it focuses on Paul's recapitulation of Jesus' passion. Note the similarities between Luke's accounts of Jesus' trip to Jerusalem and Paul's. Both stories involve a plot by the Jews and handing over to the Gentiles. There were triple predictions along the way of suffering in Jerusalem in both cases. Both Jesus and Paul steadfastly resolved to go there despite opposition, and both resigned themselves to God's will. Luke probably told his story as he did to help the reader appreciate the similarities between Jesus and Paul to authenticate Paul's ministry.¹
- b) Now Begins the final leg of the journey to Jerusalem, for which again Luke obviously drew on his diary. He mentions three or four stops, followed by three landings. [Stott]
- c) The Travel in the first section of the trip is quickly covered in verses 1-6; the scene in Caesarea is longer [7-14]. The arrival in Jerusalem is noted in verses 15-16. In Caesarea, Philip and his four unmarried daughters, who are prophetesses, appear. Here Paul is warned about the dangers he will face in Jerusalem, dangers he is ready to face. Thus the unit prepares for the final section of Acts, where Paul is arrested in Jerusalem and taken to Rome.²

2) TRANSITIONS

- a) **1-3** Paul leaves the Ephesians elders at Miletus and sets sail and passes, Cos, Rhodes and Patara. From there he travels to Phoenicia, Cyprus, Syria and finally lands at Tyre. [7]
- b) **4-6** Paul and his companions seek out the disciples at Tyre and stay for 7 days; they tell Paul by the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem; after the 7 days, Paul says farewell to them as they board the ship.
- c) **7** They travel from Tyre to Ptolemais and stay for one day with the disciples there.
- d) **8-14** They travel from Ptolemais to Caesarea and find Philip the Evangelist and stay with him and his family for many days and hear from Agabus the prophet.
- e) **14-16** Paul leaves for Jerusalem by escort and come to the home of Mnason.

¹ Constable Study notes, map from Logos maps

² Bock



3) READ ACTS 21:1-16

4) Verses 1-6 The Final Voyage of Paul's Third Missionary Journey

- a) And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. [see map above]
 2 And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.
 3 When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. 4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

**Below is information given concerning each city mentioned above, obviously, there is theological significance in the cities, but in these verses, they are simply geographical references to explain the course they took.

- i) **Cos** - Island and its chief city between Miletus and Rhodes where Paul landed briefly on his return voyage after his third missionary journey ([Acts 21:1](#)). It was a center for education, trade, wine, purple dye, and ointment. Hippocrates founded a school of medicine there. It is modern Kos.
- ii) **Rhodes** - Island off the southwest coast of Asia Minor in the Mediterranean Sea associated with the Dodanim ([Genesis 10:4](#) ; [Ezekiel 27:15](#)). See [Acts 21:1](#)), Rhodes was only a minor provincial city.
- iii) **Patara** - The cities located on the Anatolian peninsula (modern-day Turkey). Cities of Asia Minor important to the New Testament accounts included Alexandria Troas, Assos, Ephesus, Miletus, Patara, Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colassae, Attalia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Tarsus.
- iv) **Phoenicia** - Place name meaning, “purple” or “crimson,” translation of Hebrew “Canaan,” land of purple.” The narrow land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Lebanon Mountains between Tyre in the south and Arvad in the north. New Testament Phoenicia reached south to Dor. Great forest land enabled the people to build ships and become the dominant seafaring nation. The forests also provided timber for export, Phoenician cedars being the featured material of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 5:8-10).
- v) **Cyprus** - A large island in the eastern Mediterranean Sea mentioned most prominently in Acts. In the Old Testament scattered references refer to the island as Kittim (Chittim, [Isaiah 23:1](#) ; [Jeremiah 2:10](#)), although in some passages the term has a wider scope and includes lands other than Cyprus lying west of Palestine ([Daniel 11:30](#)). The island 138 miles long east to west and 60 miles wide from north to south; it is eclipsed in size only by Sicily and Sardinia. Much of Cyprus is mountainous; the Troodos Mountains (5900 feet) dominate the western and central sections, while the Kyrenia Mountains (3100 feet) extend along the northern coast.
- vi) **Syria** - New Testament In New Testament times, Judea was made part of a procuratorship within the larger Roman province of Syria ([Matthew 4:24](#)), the latter being ruled by a governor ([Luke 2:2](#)). Syria played an important role in the early spread of Christianity. Paul was converted on the road to Damascus ([Acts 9:1-9](#)) and subsequently evangelized in the province ([Acts 15:41](#) ; [Galatians 1:21](#)). Antioch, where believers were first called “Christians” ([Acts 11:26](#)), became the base for his missionary journeys ([Acts 13:1-3](#)).
- vii) **Tyre** - Israel had relations with the two cities, but especially with Tyre. David employed Tyrian stonemasons and carpenters and used cedars from that area in building a palace. ([2 Samuel 5:11](#)). The construction of the Temple in Jerusalem during Solomon's reign depended heavily on the materials and

craftsmen from Tyre. About 870 B.C., Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the Phoenician king, bringing Baal worship to Israel's court. Ezekiel 28:1 characterizes the king of Tyre as the ultimate example of pride. Under Roman rule, the two cities were important ports of trade, but they did not enjoy the dominance they previously held. Jesus spent time in Tyre and Sidon and in contrast to the prophets' attitude toward the cities, He contrasted them with the Jews as examples of faith (Matthew 11:20-22). Paul spent seven days in Tyre after his third missionary journey (Acts 21:3-4).

b) 4 And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

(1) The journey from Patara to Tyre was approximately 400 miles by a straight course and generally took five days or so under favorable winds. Tyre was the main port for merchant traffic between Asia and Palestine.³

ii) **Who were these disciples?** - Refugees from the persecution that followed **Stephen's martyrdom** had evangelized Phoenicia (11:19). Paul and his companions *stayed in Tyre for seven days* fellowshipping with the Christians.⁴

(1) What of the seemingly contradictions in the Spirit's leading? The warnings along the way prepared Paul for the imprisonment and hardship that did indeed befall him there, so these promptings from the Spirit fortified him for the experience, and convinced him that God was in it all.⁵

iii) **Prayed** - As they had done when leaving the Ephesian elders, Paul and his fellow missionaries kneeled down and prayed with these believers before they parted (cf. 20:36). This reflects Paul's ongoing commitment to and dependance on God. Then they re-boarded the ship, and the Christians of Tyre returned home.⁶

³ Polhill, pg 432

⁴ Constable

⁵ Polhill

⁶ Constable

(1) The disciples at Tyre were not old friends of Paul, as the Ephesians were, but the love of Christ is the strongest of bonds, and by the end of the week they were as firm of friends as if they had known each other their entire lives.⁷

iv) **wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city** - one of the few references to children in Acts - all members of the family accompanied Paul for his farewell.

5) Verses 7-14 Paul's Gethsemane

a) **7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. 10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."**

i) **7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. 8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.**

(1) **Ptolemais** -Place name for famous Mediterranean seaport north of Mount Carmel. Territory was assigned to tribe of Asher, but they could not conquer it (Judges 1:31). The Greeks renamed Acco, Ptolemais. On his third missionary voyage, Paul spent one day in Ptolemais (Acts 21:7). The

⁷ Bruce

city has a long history documented by Near Eastern records reaching back to about 2000 B.C., but it plays a small role in the biblical narrative.

- (2) **Caesarea** - Herod determined to build a fine port facility and support it by a new city. The harbor, which he named Sebastos (Latin, Augustus), was a magnificently engineered project. The southern breakwater was built of huge mortared stones placed in a semicircle about 2000 feet long, and the northern one is of similar construction almost 900 feet long. Great statues of Augustus and Roma were erected at the entrance. An inner harbor appears to have been dug into the land where mooring berths and vaulted warehouses were constructed. Josephus described the construction of the harbor and accompanying city in grandiose detail. The city was Hellenistic in design and style and named Caesarea for Caesar. In addition to the many buildings a platform was raised near the harbor upon which a temple was built for Caesar with a Colossus of Caesar.



- (3)
- (4) **House of Philip the evangelist** - Personal name meaning, “fond of horses.” 1. A respected member of the church at Jerusalem who was chosen as one of the seven—first deacons ([Acts 6:5](#)). Following Stephen's martyrdom, Philip took the gospel to Samaria, where his ministry was blessed ([Acts 8:5-13](#)). Subsequently, he was led south to the Jerusalem-Gaza road where he introduced the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ and baptized him ([Acts 8:26-38](#)). He was then transported by the Spirit to Azotus (Ashdod) and from there conducted an itinerent ministry until he took up residence in Caesarea ([Acts 8:39-40](#)). Then, for nearly twenty years, we lose sight of him. He is last seen in Scripture when Paul lodged

in his home on his last journey to Jerusalem ([Acts 21:8](#)). He had four unmarried daughters who were prophetesses ([Acts 21:9](#)).

(a) He is called the “evangelist” to distinguish him from the Philip the Apostle.⁸

ii) **10 While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.’”**

(1) **Agabus** previously had come from *Jerusalem to Antioch* to foretell the famine of A.D. 46 (11:26-27). Now he came down to *Caesarea* and prophesied Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (cf. Mark 9:31; 10:33; John 21:18). He illustrated his prediction graphically as several Old Testament prophets had done (cf. 1 Kings 11:29-31; Isa. 20:2-4; Jer. 13:1-7; Ezek. 4).

(a) “This is what the Holy Spirit says,” is the Christian equivalent of the Old Testament, “Thus saith the Lord.” His revelation came as no surprise to Paul, of course (v. 4; 9:16). Perhaps another reason Luke emphasized these prophecies was to prove to his readers that Paul's arrest and its consequences were part of God's foreordained will for the church's expansion (1:1-2; cf. Mark 10:33).⁹

(b) As Ahijah the Shionite tore his new cloak to show how Solomon's kingdom would be disrupted (1 Kings 11:29-39) as Isaiah went about naked and barefoot to show how the Egyptians would be led into captivity by the Assyrians (Isa 20:2-4), as Ezekiel mimicked the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem by laying siege himself to a replica of the city (Ezek. 4:1-3), so Agabus foretold the binding of Paul by tying himself up with Paul's girdle.¹⁰

iii) **12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to**

⁸ Stott

⁹ Constable

¹⁰ Bruce

die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” 14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”

- (1) Paul’s words are almost identical with Peter’s, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” Luke 22:33 - the difference was Peter faltered and Paul was true to his words.¹¹
- (2) *Why did Paul avoid the possibility of death in Corinth (20:3) but not here?* Paul’s purpose to deliver the collection and so strengthen the unity of the Gentile and Jewish believers would have failed if he had died on board a ship between Corinth and Jerusalem. However arrest in Jerusalem would not frustrate that purpose. For Paul, and eventually for his friends (v. 14), the Lord’s will was more important than physical safety (cf. Luke 22:42). He believed the Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem (19:21; 20:22) so he “set his face” to go there (cf. Luke 9:51).¹² [take this cup from me, yet your will, not mine be done]
- (3) **14 And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, “Let the will of the Lord be done.”** - Unable to dissuade him, Paul’s friends stopped urging him and committed the situation to the Lord.
 - (a) “Perhaps he regarded Caesarea as his temptation and Gethsemane. If so, the congregation, catching the thought, echoed the garden prayer of Christ: The will of the Lord be done . . .”¹³

iv) These verses are also known as “Paul’s Gethsemane.”¹⁴

6) Verses 15-16 Paul’s Jerusalem Contact

- i) Paul’s journey was now nearly complete. There remained only the final sixty-four miles between Caesarea and Jerusalem. For this final leg they may have used pack animals. This is all the more likely when one recalls that they were carrying the sizable collection from Paul’s Gentile churches.
- ii) It would have been a considerable group making the trip, including Paul and Luke, those delegated by the churches to bear the collection (20:4), and some of the Caesarean Christians (v. 16).

¹¹ stott

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Polhill

iii) Once in Jerusalem, the Caesareans led them to the home of a disciple named Mnason with whom arrangements had been made for their lodging. Showing his characteristic interest in hosts, Luke further described Mnason as a Cypriot and a long-time disciple.¹⁵

b) 15 After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 16 And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

i) Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple - Mnason evidently became a Christian early in the history of the church, perhaps on the day of Pentecost. He was a Hellenistic Jewish Christian being from Cyprus, like Barnabas. As such he would have been more open to entertaining a mixed group of Jewish and Gentile Christians than many Hebrew Jewish Christians in Palestine would have been. Apparently he lived about halfway between Caesarea and Jerusalem.¹⁶

(1) Not every member of the church of Jerusalem would be prepared to have a party of Gentile Christians in his home; but they might be sure of a hospitable reception from Mnason, one of the small minority of Hellenists still remaining in the mother-church.¹⁷

ii) Paul finally achieved the first phase of his plan to visit Jerusalem and then Rome (19:21). In doing so, he brought one chapter of his ministry to a close and opened another. His return to Jerusalem was an essential part of God's plan to send Paul to Rome. This plan unfolds in the rest of chapter 21. In all, Paul traveled about **2,700 miles on his third missionary journey** (cf. 14:28; 18:22).¹⁸

(1) Jesus too journeyed to Jerusalem, and during his journey prophesied concerning his impending sufferings; he was arrested and tried, appearing before the Jews and the Romans...¹⁹

¹⁵ Polhill

¹⁶ constable

¹⁷ Bruce

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

7) CLOSE

- a) **End of His Third Journey** - "Paul's third missionary journey was complete, having begun after a visit to "the church" in the holy city (18:22) and now ending there. His Greek mission was also complete. He would not return. Luke had prepared his readers well for this reality. Paul had made the fact clear in his address to the Ephesian elders (20:25). Paul's own forebodings (20:22f.) and those of the Christians at Tyre and Caesarea have prepared us for the events that are about to unfold in Jerusalem. Paul would no longer bear his witness as a free man in the subsequent narrative of Acts. He would be in chains, but the chains would be unable to bind his witness. His witness would indeed become bolder still."²⁰
- b) **The encouragement on the last journey** - What fortified Paul in his journey was the Christian fellowship which he and his travel companions experienced in every port. In **Tyre** they found disciples and stayed with them seven days...In **Ptolemais** they greeted their sisters and brothers and stayed with them one day...In **Caesarea** they were accommodated in the home of Philip the evangelist and stayed with him 'a number of days...the disciples from **Caesarea** then personally escorted Paul and his party to **Jerusalem**, where they were to stay with the early Cypriot convert Mnason, and on arrival in Jerusalem the sisters and brothers received him warmly.²¹

8) POINTS OF APPLICATION

- a) The interaction between the believers and Paul about whether he should face suffering is significant because it shows that sometimes well-intentioned people can be wrong about what God desires.
- b) Paul has a real sense of what God is calling him to do and that he has prepared himself to pay the human price to do it.
- c) Good arguments can often be assembled for a variety of options in life's direction, but sometimes flexibility in seeing what God desires allows for support and unity to form a bond of cohesion that makes the spiritual community stronger.
- d) Some may never understand why the hard path is chosen, especially when it seems that such a difficult path could be avoided - *Sometimes the easy way out is not the right path to take, but only prayer, discernment, engagement can help determine when this is what to do.*

²⁰ Polhill

²¹ Stott