

Acts 21.1-26

Waiting, Wondering, and Walking with God

Final STAGE of LONG Trip from MACEDONIA to JERUSALEM

Luke IN Travel Party: 3 or 4 Stops = Cos, Rhodes, Patara, maybe Myra

3 LANDINGS = Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea

1. Perplexity in the Journey

LIFE – Please God! Chronic Pain? Lonely? Depression? Unclear Future?

HEALTH – WORK – FAMILY – Not to mention POLITICS...!

Some Christians – Follow Jesus by Escape from World > Monastery!

Others > Xtian LIFE is Unattainable, IDEALISTIC, Other Worldly

Followers of Jesus > Real People – Problems and Challenges of Life

vs. 8,9 the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

WIFE? How'd Raise GODLY Daughters before James Dobson BORN?

a. Kingdom Agenda Where & What is RIGHT Focus of our Ministry?

Gospel of Kingdom > GLOBAL Concern for ALL People, All Spheres

1) Paul – The Offering for Jews ...Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. Romans 15.26,27

(Paul) was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. Acts 20.4

Paul's Sincere HOPE: Reconcile Jew & Gentile Believers in ONE Church

Visible EXPRESSION Unity > OFFERING from GENTILES for JEWS

2) Luke – The Offering of Gentiles - Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." Acts 19.21

Luke / GENTILE: Luke/Acts > GLOBAL Appeal – Gospel for ALL

ROME – CENTER of EMPIRE > Potential to CHANGE World

Perhaps Luke Wondered > How is Jerusalem shortest route to Rome?

Paul's Offering overlooked by Luke in Acts / No Evident Enthusiasm

Paul to Felix: "I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor" Acts 24.17

Paul then Arrested > No Record in ACTS – WHERE Money went?

vs. 12,14 ...we...pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem... *When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up* and said, "The Lord's will be done."

Luke gives EXPLANATION --- Carries HINT of EXASPERATION!

b. Kingdom Advance

1) Predictions by the Spirit vs. 10,11 ...a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

Happened: Paul Arrested by Jewish Relig Leaders / Handed to Roman Legions

Paul: "Now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me *prison and hardships are facing me*" Acts 20.22-23

2) Prescription of the Spirit? No! v. 4 disciples...through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem...

Because of CLEAR Witness of SPIRIT – Friends Want to STOP Paul

Messages of Spirit Not Contradict E/Other – Holy Spirit is GOD

Spirit's Message: Description Not Decree / Conclusion Not Command

Clearly tells Paul what Coming / Now Paul must MAKE a CHOICE

Spirit warned in Every City > 'TROUBLE AHEAD' in Jerusalem

Paul interprets 'GO FOR IT!' / BELIEVERS interpret 'GET OUT OF IT!'

Area of Fear > Paul gets HIGH MARKS > Absolutely FEARLESS

Others Around him --- NOT SO SURE --- Paul is UNWAVERING

Are we to blame Paul for his obstinacy or admire him his unshakeable resolve? John Stott

c. Kingdom Attacked - Consequences of our Choices

1) Paul the Human

Paul's Ministry: 10 Chpts of Acts > 20 yrs of Faithful SERVICE

NOW: Huge SHIFT – Ministry in CHAINS > Acts > NEVER Free Again

From Luke's Telling: Paul's Ministry Ends in Rome (Get Out? Spain?)

SIN INTENTIONAL & UNINTENTIONAL

Possible for Fallible Man to Write INFALLIBLE Message of Scripture
Spirit in Inspiration NOT Guarantee Correctness Every DESTINATION

Noble Intentions of Paul in Jerusalem > Understood GOD'S LEADING

Passionate – Sacrificial Desire > Salvation of Jewish KINSMEN

Willing to SUFFER HELL so THEY ENTER HEAVEN – If he could...

Passionate Agenda >> BLINDED to POTENTIAL DANGERS

When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly...went to see James, and all the elders were present. Paul...reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. 21.17-24

Some far from Family Home – Return Home can be Painful –

YOU have Really Changed > Those back Home > Not Much Progress

Many Churches – Friends – Families – Loved One > SMALL Vision

SAD when NOT Moved Forward into NEW WORKS of the Lord

That's Situation Paul's Return Home to Jerusalem / 25 yrs since Pentecost

More Concerned for Jewish CEREMONY than GENTILE SALVATION

Paul SLANDERED and MISUNDERSTOOD Supported Jewish Customs

Jews Solution NOT Clarification of Falsehood > Compounds Falsehood

Pay Vow for 4 Men > Substantial Amount - Gentiles Funds for Poor?

PAYMENT? Animals to be Sacrificed on Temple Altar after 7 Days!

Purification? Reports to Jewish Priest in Temple – Sprinkled with 'Water of
ATONEMENT' for PURIFICATION on 3rd and 7th Days

So What? Isn't this MERELY Becoming a JEW to WIN JEWS??

MANY Commentators: Several of My Heroes – Say that is All it Is

Nothing Wrong w Being German Christian, Filipino Christian, Brazilian

Why CAN'T these Jews be JEWISH CHRISTIANS??

Much of the Jewishness of the church was wrapped up in the traditions that had been fulfilled and abolished by Christ's coming. The Jerusalem church was trying to maintain not merely the moral standards of the law of Moses...but also the Law's system of ceremonial purification and observances...
James Boice

2) Paul the Hero Faced Jerusalem > Understood Dangers, Jesus DIED

v. 13 "I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Luke: CLEAR PARALLEL btwn Jesus // Paul TO JERUSALEM

1. Both REJECTED by their OWN People, Unjustly Arrested, Imprisoned
2. Both FALSELY Accused and Misrepresented by FALSE WITNESSES
3. Both were SLAPPED in the Face in Court
4. Both were HAPLESS Victims of SECRET Jewish Plots
5. Both heard TERRIFYING Noise of Crowd SCREAMING for Death
6. Both were Subjected to FIVE Different TRIALS

With what drama and pathos Luke has recorded how God's people rejected the Son of God! Luke records a similar drama and pathos in his second volume in his report on the journey of one of the great sons of the Israelites to Jerusalem.
Ajith Fernando

2. Promises in Jesus

Traveling thru Fog > Move Forward - Slowly - Clear Lights to GUIDE

Man on AIRPLANE > Sharing THIS STORY w lady NEXT SEAT
WOMAN 'Well, you can say that, but it is *JUST YOUR OPINION!*'

MAN – Continued to TELL the STORY of JESUS

WOMAN 'Well, you can say that, but it is JUST YOUR OPINION!'

MAN: YES! It is MY Opinion >> **IMPT QUESTION 'IS IT TRUE??'**

a. Words of Scripture – Clearest Light, Words in Black/White...Pixels!

Many Life Issues & QUESTIONS – Bible is SILENT, or NEARLY Silent

BIBLE is Not EXHAUSTIVE Encyclopedia of Human History

NOT Complete Record All Truth – All God Made & Done Universe

Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written. John 21.25

NARROW Purpose of Bible ...the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus
2 Timothy 3.15

Bible's THEME is God's SALVATION Story
 4 Gospels proclaim SAVIOR of World – He is Theme of all 66 Books
 ISSUE in Our Text > Maybe God asking Paul to LIVE, NOT DIE Yet!
 20 yrs Ministry > MUCH to SHOW for It > READY to Run FINAL LAP
 From Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have *fully proclaimed* the gospel of Christ...
 Romans 15.19

Sometimes MOST COURAGEOUS thing is to LIVE ANOTHER DAY

Especially with PAIN and SUFFERING --- In BODY and SPIRIT

Because PAUL Insisted on TAKING the DEATH-MARCH to Jerusalem

- Almost compromised by his sterling witness to 'justification by faith alone' by offering an animal sacrifice for his sins.
- Almost gets himself, and his team, killed in a riot in Jerusalem

Yes DEATH is GAIN for him, but LOSS for the CHURCH

Reliable Church tradition says James, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church, was killed by mobs right in the streets of Jerusalem.

- Spends more than 2 years in prisons in Middle East
- At least 2 more years, and probably dies, in prison in Rome
- Probably never went westward from Rome, never to Spain
- Was unable to personally oversee the work of mission into the Western Mediterranean world, or beyond

NOT KNOW – SECRET COUNCIL of God – for PAUL or ME!

MET Man on BUS in San Francisco > Still Prays for Paul's M Journeys

Philosophy Major > Understood was NO TIME with GOD

If Paul was not in error, he was probably dangerously close. Kent Hughes

Amy Carmichael to INDIA as M 1895 > Soon met Frantic, 7 yr old Girl

Running from HINDU Temple – Held Prisoner to Satisfy LUSTS of Men

Worshippers of HINDU gods > 1 of 1000's YOUNG GIRL Prisoners

That DAY: Amy Carmichael Vowed RESCUE Girls > Teach, Love

TRUSTING KING Jesus to bring them NEW LIFE and LIBERTY

One Day Early in her Ministry her MORNING Prayer: 'Do anything, Lord, that will fit me to serve you better.'

Amy Carmichael

THAT DAY Slipped into PIT > Permanent Leg Injury > 20 yrs in BED

BED of Affliction: Amy wrote 13 books blessed millions of Sufferers

World NOT Ordered by CHAOS – but by KING – JESUS

b. Witness of the Spirit : LEADS, even when get Selves in a Mess

Whether or NOT Jerusalem was GOD’S BEST > God used PAUL Again

- Attempted to make strong witness unity 1 Church comprised of Jew/Gentile believers, seems unappreciated by Jews
- Makes bold witness for Jesus before Kings and rulers
- Probably made fruitful use of prison, including writing letters
- Good witness of endurance in the midst of his sufferings
- Long, hazardous journey to Rome by protection/provision Rome
- Possibly presented Christian message to Roman Caesar

c. Work of the Savior > Saves FROM SIN and from OURSELVES

PAUL Risked UNFORGIVABLE SIN > REJECTING Salvation of Jesus

When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him...The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. Acts 21.27-30

7th DAY > ANIMAL SACRIFICE for Purification due to be OFFERED

GOD REFUSES – NO MORE Sacrifices AT ALL on That Day

GATES SHUT – Luke’s LAST WORDS about JEWISH TEMPLE

KING Jesus – LORD of Life’s Circumstances – SAVES Paul from Self

From BEING KILLED and COMMITTING Tragic COMPROMISE

The same apostle who had written so many New Testament books, the man who had argued so forcefully that we are saved by Jesus Christ alone is about to go into the Jewish temple and in the presence of the very priests who had crucified the Lord, there participate with others in a sacrifice of an animal that was meant to be an atonement for his sin. James Boice

Few Yrs LATER – Temple DESTROYED by Romans > Never REBUILT

Until TODAY – God NOT ALLOWED More BLOOD Shed for SINS

...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...

Hebrews 10.3-14

Who Needs Jesus?

EVEN APOSTLE – Perhaps Greatest Apostle – Can ALMOST BLOW It
INERRANCY of Writings > NOT Mean INFALLIBILITY in all DOES

PAUL Needs JESUS More than he EVER KNEW!

Despite Plans Blowing Up in Face > Ending his Freedom for Service

Jesus NOT Finished with PAUL: RISEN Lord is RESTORES Servant

BOLD CONFESSION before Jewish SANHEDRIN –The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "*Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.*" Acts 23.11

ALL Earthly HEROES only HUMAN > All Need Jesus!

Words of Scripture > Lamp unto our Feet, Light unto our Path

Witness of the Spirit > He LEADS, even when get Ourselves in MESS

Work of the Savior > BLOOD Shed on CROSS Covers Multitude Sins

Who NEEDS Jesus?? I CANNOT SPEAK FOR YOU – BUT I DO. Paul writes to Timothy in Ephesus: “formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus” 1 Timothy 1.13,14

Congregational Prayer

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?...Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord. Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, “Seek my face.” My heart says to you, “Your face, Lord, do I seek.”

Hide not your face from me. Turn not your servant away in anger, O you who have been my help.

Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.

Teach me your way, O Lord, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies. Give me not up to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living! Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!” (Psalm 27)

God help me Wait in Faith – and be Fruitful while I wait!

“I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Timothy 1.13-17