

## THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

### MINISTRY NOTES

- A. Paul completed his third missionary journey in Syria as he prepared to go to Jerusalem.
- B. Luke accompanied Paul on this portion of the trip and gives an account that parallels Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.
- C. Richard Longenecker, *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.*

### TO JERUSALEM, ACTS 21:1-16

- A. Travel by sea to Tyre (1-6)
  - 1. Paul's route from Miletus to Tyre (1-3)
    - a. Paul and company departed from Miletus (1), *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.*
      - 1) Miletus was the home of Hippocrates (the Hippocratic Oath).
      - 2) Cos and Rhodes were each islands off the coast of Asia, and about one day's journey by sea.
      - 3) Patara was on the southwest coast of Asia, a day's journey by sea from Rhodes.
      - 4) Rhodes was where the huge statue of Apollo, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, had stood at the entrance to the harbor.
    - b. They boarded a second ship for Phoenicia (2-3), *And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 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.*
      - 1) Paul and those traveling with him switched to a larger ship to take them to Phoenicia.
      - 2) The journey from Patara to Tyre in Phoenicia was 400 miles and about a 5 day voyage with good weather.
      - 3) Tyre was in ancient Phoenicia but at the time was part of the Roman province of Syria.
      - 4) They passed in sight of Cyprus to the north.
  - 2. Paul encouraged not to go to Jerusalem (4-6)
    - a. They stayed with believers in Tyre who encouraged Paul not to go to Jerusalem (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.*
      - 1) After arriving in Tyre, Paul sought out Christians with whom he and his party could stay.
      - 2) Christianity was established in the region after Christians were scattered by persecution of Christians in Jerusalem, Acts 11:19, *Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews.*
      - 3) Paul's hosts urged him not to go to Jerusalem *through the Spirit.*
        - a) Was Paul disobedient in not doing what these Christians believed was God's will?
        - b) Probably, the intent of the message was a warning of coming persecution and the people were concerned for his safety, Homer Kent, *Paul, however, regarded it not as a prohibition but a divine forewarning so that he would be spiritually prepared for what would happen.*
        - c) Paul was confident that God was directing him to go to Jerusalem, Acts 20:22, *And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,*
    - b. They chose to continue to Jerusalem (5-6), *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 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.*
      - 1) The Christians in Tyre, men, women and children, accompanied Paul and his group to the edge of the city.
      - 2) As in Miletus, everyone knelt in prayer for Paul and his companions.

- 3) Stanley Toussaint, *This was Paul's first contact with this church at Tyre, and yet after only one week there was a strong bond of love.*
- 4) Paul would consider his journey to Jerusalem by ship and the Christians in Tyre returned home.

B. To Caesarea (7-14)

1. Paul stayed one day in Ptolemais (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.***

- a. Paul arrived by ship in Ptolemais which is now called Acre, 20 miles south of Tyre.
- b. Again, Paul stayed with Christians who probably were part of the early church dispersion.

2. The second day he arrived in Caesarea (8-9), ***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. He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.***

- a. Caesarea was the port city for Jerusalem and the capital of the province of Judea.
- b. It is unclear whether Paul traveled by boat or walked the 30 miles from Ptolemais to Caesarea.
- c. Paul stayed with Philip the evangelist.

- 1) He was one of the seven chosen to serve the widows in Jerusalem, Acts 6:1-5, *Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the full number of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole gathering, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch.*
- 2) Also, he was an evangelist, Acts 8:26-40, *Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*
- 3) He had four daughters who prophesied.
  - a) It could refer to foretelling of future events or interpretation of Scripture.
  - b) Thomas Constable, *...these women imparted information about the early history of the Jerusalem church to Papias, a church father.*

3. A warning to Paul

- a. From Agabus (10-11), ***While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 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 had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch to foretell the famine of 46 A.D., Acts 11:28, *And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).*

- 2) Now, he went to Jerusalem to warn Paul of his future arrest in Jerusalem.
  - a) His prophecy came from the Holy Spirit.
  - b) Agabus illustrated Paul's arrest by using his belt to bind his hands and feet.
  - c) Paul was aware of his future imprisonment and Luke was probably emphasizing the importance of Paul's arrest in the future spread of the Gospel.
  
- b. The response of Luke and others (12), *When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.*
  - 1) Christian brothers and sisters were concerned for Paul's safety and *urged* (begged, pleaded) him not to go, including Luke.
  - 2) Paul was confident that God's plan for him was much more important than his safety.
  - 3) This is a reminder of how the disciples urged Jesus not to go to Jerusalem even though it was the reason He came to earth, Matthew 16:21-23, *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."*
  
- c. The response of Paul (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."*
  - 1) Paul responded by emphasizing his mission as much more important than avoiding danger.
  - 2) Paul had reached the place where he was dead to self and alive in Christ.
  - 3) I. Howard Marshall, *The grief displayed by Paul's friends had the effect of pounding at his heart as they attempted to dissuade him. But for himself Paul was quite prepared not merely for what was prophesied but also for possible death at Jerusalem. It was not that there was any virtue in such sufferings for their own sake, but only if they were accomplished on behalf of the name of Jesus, i.e., as a necessary part of Christian service.*
  
- d. A consensus to continue to Jerusalem (14), *And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."*
  - 1) Luke, Paul's traveling companions and the Christians in Caesarea agreed with Paul that the will of the Lord is most important.
  - 2) Some believe Paul was driven by the desire to present the financial gift from the non-Jewish Christians to the Jewish Christians, demonstrating the unity all peoples have in Christ.
  - 3) It is possible that Paul was still motivated to take the Gospel to places where Christ had not been proclaimed and that the Spirit was impressing on him the need to go to Jerusalem first.
  
- C. On to Jerusalem (15-16), *After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 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.*
  1. Paul departed for Jerusalem, 65 miles away, accompanied by some of the Christians from Caesarea.
  2. They lodged at the home of Mnason which was about halfway to Jerusalem.
    - a. It is believed that Mnason became a Christian on the day of Pentecost.
    - b. He was a Hellenistic Jewish Christian from Cyprus, like Barnabas.
    - c. Thomas Constable, *...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.*
  3. This was the conclusion of Paul's third missionary journey.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. Hospitality was a common Christian practice.
- B. There was deep care and concern for brothers and sisters in Christ.
- C. Paul demonstrated his declaration in Philippians 1:21, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*