

STICK & STAY

*“you shall be witnesses to Me and to the **end of the earth**”*

Mass Teaching | 12 September 2023

Acts 21:1-36 (ESV)

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KEY THEME

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,
and **you will be my witnesses**
in Jerusalem

*and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the end of the earth*

4 journeys

Paul took four missionary journeys:

1st: through Cyprus, Pamphylia, and Galatia.

2nd: through Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

3rd: through Galatia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, end at **Jerusalem**.

imprisoned in Caesarea for 2 years and then placed under house arrest in Rome for 2 years.

4th: not clear, may be in Spain, Crete, Asia, Achaia, Macedonia.

Today's Passage

Acts 21:1-36

c.f. Acts 20:4

Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus,
accompanied Paul;
& of the Thessalonians, **Aristarchus** & **Secundus**;
& **Gaius** of Derbe, & **Timothy**;
and the Asians, **Tychicus** & **Trophimus** & **Luke**

c.f. Acts 20:16

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus,
so that he might not have to spend time in Asia,
for **he was hastening to be at Jerusalem**,
if possible, **on the day of Pentecost**.

Acts 21:1-36

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

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But you will **receive power**
when the **Holy Spirit has come** upon you,
and **you will be my witnesses**
in Jerusalem
and in all Judea and Samaria,
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Acts 21:1-36

Today's Passage

STORY FLOW

Ending stage of Paul's 3rd missionary Journey

vv 1-16

Ephesus to Jerusalem

Prophecy of Paul's Arrest

being revealed by the HS to
2 groups of local believers
to urge Paul not to go Jerusalem

vv 17-26

Jerusalem

Interaction between Paul & James' Team

- 1) Thanksgiving Report
- 2) Conflicting Concern
- 3) Consistent Living

vv 27-36

Jerusalem

Fulfilment of Paul's Arrest

due to accusation from the Jews
yet not sentence to death
bcoz God intervened

Ephesus

Acts 21:1-16

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Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied Paul; & of the Thessalonians, **Aristarchus** & **Secundus**; & **Gaius** of Derbe, & **Timothy**; and the Asians, **Tychicus** & **Trophimus** & **Luke**

Cos

Rhodes

Patara

Cyrus

Phoenicia

Syria

Tyre

Ptolemais

Caesarea

Jerusalem

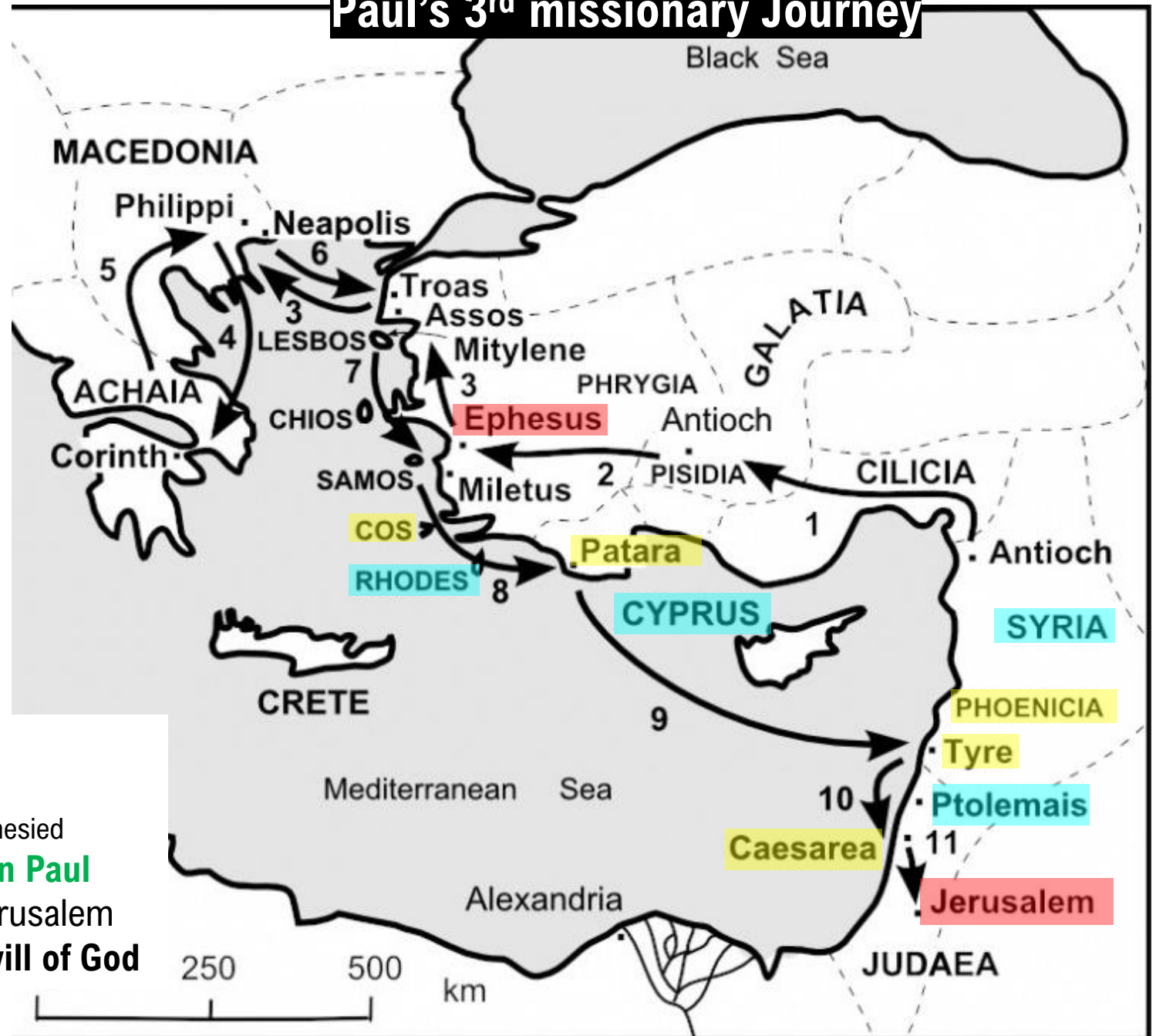
At Tyre (v4-6a)

- 7 days with local believers who **warned Paul not to go Jerusalem** (revealed by HS)
- Prayed at beach on last day

At Caesarea (v8-15)

- House of Philip for many days
>> 4 unmarried daughters who prophesied
- **Prophet Agabus's prophecy on Paul**
- **Paul's determination** to go Jerusalem
- Resolve their worry with the **will of God**

Paul's 3rd missionary Journey



Acts 21:1-16

Holy Spirit revealed a
REALITY
The Arrest
of Paul in Jerusalem

At Tyre (v4-6a)

- 7 days with local believers who **warned Paul not to go Jerusalem** (revealed by HS)
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- House of Philip for many days >> 4 unmarried daughters who prophesied
- **Prophet Agabus's prophecy** of Paul's arrest
- Paul's determination to go Jerusalem
- Resolve their worry with the will of God

To the local believers
in Tyre

Their Response:

**21:4 “they were telling Paul
not to go on to Jerusalem”**

To a prophet (Agabus)
from Judea

Their Response:

**21:21 “we & the pp there urged
Paul not to go up to Jerusalem”**

***Is Paul going against the Holy Spirit's revelation
and “repeated warnings” from fellow believers?***

Acts 21:1-36

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Acts 21:27-36



"Men of Israel, help! **Acts 21:28**

This is the **man who is teaching** everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place.

Moreover, **he even brought Greeks** into the temple and has defiled this holy place."

Basis of Accusation

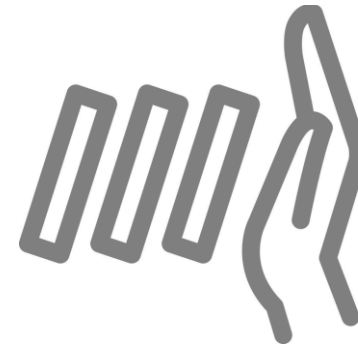
Teachings against the Law

Defilement of God's Temple

Mob's Intention **Acts 21:30-31a**

Then all the city was stirred up,
and the people ran together.

They seized Paul and dragged him...
...they were seeking to kill him...



Acts 21:31b

**GOD'S
INTERVENTION**

God saved His people through NC authority:

- 1) God saved Peter **thru' Gamaliel** (5:34-40)
- 2) God saved Paul **thru' Town Clerk** (19:35-41)
- 3) God saved Paul **thru' Tribune** (present)

TEACHING POINT #1

vv 1-16

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Teaching Point #1

Anchor myself to His Plan

even when the worst is expected
even when genuine care is expressed

Translating Into Real Action

c.f. Acts 20:22-24

²² And now, behold, **I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit**,
not knowing what will happen to me there,

²³ except that the **Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that
imprisonment and afflictions await me.**

²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself,
if only I may **finish my course and the ministry** that I received from the Lord Jesus,
to **testify to the gospel** of the grace of God.

REFLECTION #1

Teaching Point #1

Anchor myself to His Plan

even when the worst is expected
even when genuine care is expressed

Am I mindful to

**anchor myself in
His Plan/Truth/Principle**

to live my present life?

☒ disregard
☒ weigh & explain
People's Feedback

Am I attentive to

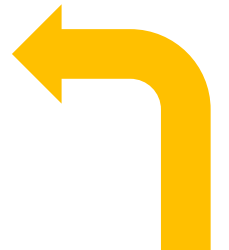
**listen carefully
His Revelation/Voice**

to live my present life?

☒ run away / avoid
☒ face with courage
Situation Ahead

*"Courage is not the absence of fear;
It is action in the presence of fear"*

☒ biased
☒ Ask God to guard
My (selfish) Heart & Desire



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Team 1

Paul

+ 8 friends

+ Disciples from Caesarea

Team 2

James (c.f. Acts 15)

+ brothers

+ all the elders



c.f. Acts 20:4

Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus,
accompanied Paul;
& of the Thessalonians, **Aristarchus** & **Secundus**;
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Paul
+ 8 friends
+ Disciples from Caesarea



James
+ brothers
+ all the elders

Thanksgiving Report

(v19-20a)

- Paul related 1-by-1 on **what God had done among the Gentiles** thru his ministry
- They glorified God



Conflicting Concern

(v20b-25)

- Paul's teaching on "**forsaking**" **the law of Moses** to the Jews among Gentiles

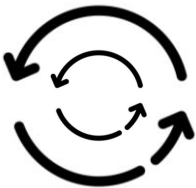
e.g. circumcision, following customs



Consistent Living

(v26)

- Paul **purified himself together** with 4 men
- A **reflection of his obedience** to the law
- Reinforce letter sent to Gentile
- ★ **Ct on abstinence** (c.f. Acts 15:28-29)
(idolatry, immorality, uncleanness)





At Antioch / Syria/ Cilicia

Certain men (from Judea)
challenged B&P

**"Unless you are circumcised
according to the custom of Moses,
you cannot be saved."**

J&S + B&P

(in person at Antioch)

- No such directive
- J&S will explain in person
- Not be troubled over it
- Focus on changing fr old ways
- Continue to extort & strengthen
- Continue to teach & preach

Judas & Silas

(thru a letter)

- No such directive
- J&S will explain in person
- Not be troubled over it
- Focus on changing fr old ways (idolatry, immorality, uncleanness)

B&P disagreed

B&P agreed

At Phoenicia & Samaria

- described G's conversion
- great joy among brethren

At Jerusalem

Seek clarity
with the apostles & elders



Some sect of the Pharisees
**"It is necessary
to circumcise them,
and to command them
to keep the law of Moses."**



Peter's Speech

- God is impartial to all
- Not to go against B&P

James' Speech

- Cross reference to OT
that G will also be God's pp
- Not trouble B&P any further
- Focus on changing fr old ways

Acts 15:1-35 (in summary)



B&P's Speech

- Declaring miracles & wonders
- God worked thru Gentiles

Response of Multitude

(in Antioch)

Rejoiced & Strengthened

Response of Multitude

(in Jerusalem)

Silenced & Listened

Response of J leaders

(in Jerusalem)

Agreed & Sent two men



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by involving the Tribune

Teaching Point #2

Stay consistent in my Talk-Walk

even when a concern is raised
in order to do what is most loving

REFLECTION #2

Teaching Point #2

Stay consistent in my Talk-Walk

even when a concern is raised
in order to do what is most loving

*“We have always
been doing it this way”*

*“Tested & Proven
for many years”*

“Just do what I say”

PAST PRACTICES

We actually don't need to follow

Take a step back to...

- ✓ Acknowledge the ‘change’
- ✓ Learn to put aside my past xp
- ✓ Not to impose / dictate

If we still follow as long as

- ✓ it does not contradict His truth
- ✓ It is a loving thing to do
even when we know it's not required

e.g. permit our EH building for ISKM's event

SUMMARY

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in order to do what is most loving

c.f. Acts 20:4

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Seeing The Bigger CONTEXT



Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus,
accompanied Paul;

& of the
and the Asians, Tymon & Trophimus & Luke

CLOSING THOUGHT

**Things may not turn out as we expect,
God is still sovereign over every situation**
(e.g. arrest, opportunity to speak mob, council, deliver to Rome)
He will intervene in His own Timing

Paul's speech before the Mob (Acts 21:37-22:29)
Paul's speech before the Council (Acts 22:30-23:11)

Acts 21:1-36

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