

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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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*



Paul took four missionary journeys:

1st: through Cyrus, Pamphylia, and Galatia.

2nd: through Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

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

Today's Passage

Acts 21:1-36

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.

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

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



Acts 21:1-36

Today's Passage

STORY FLOW

Ending stage of Paul's 3rd missionary Journey

vv 1-16

Ephesus to Jerusalem

Prophesy of Paul' 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

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**

Cos

Rhodes

Patara

Cyrus

Phoenicia

Syria

Tyre

Ptolemais

Caesarea

Jerusalem

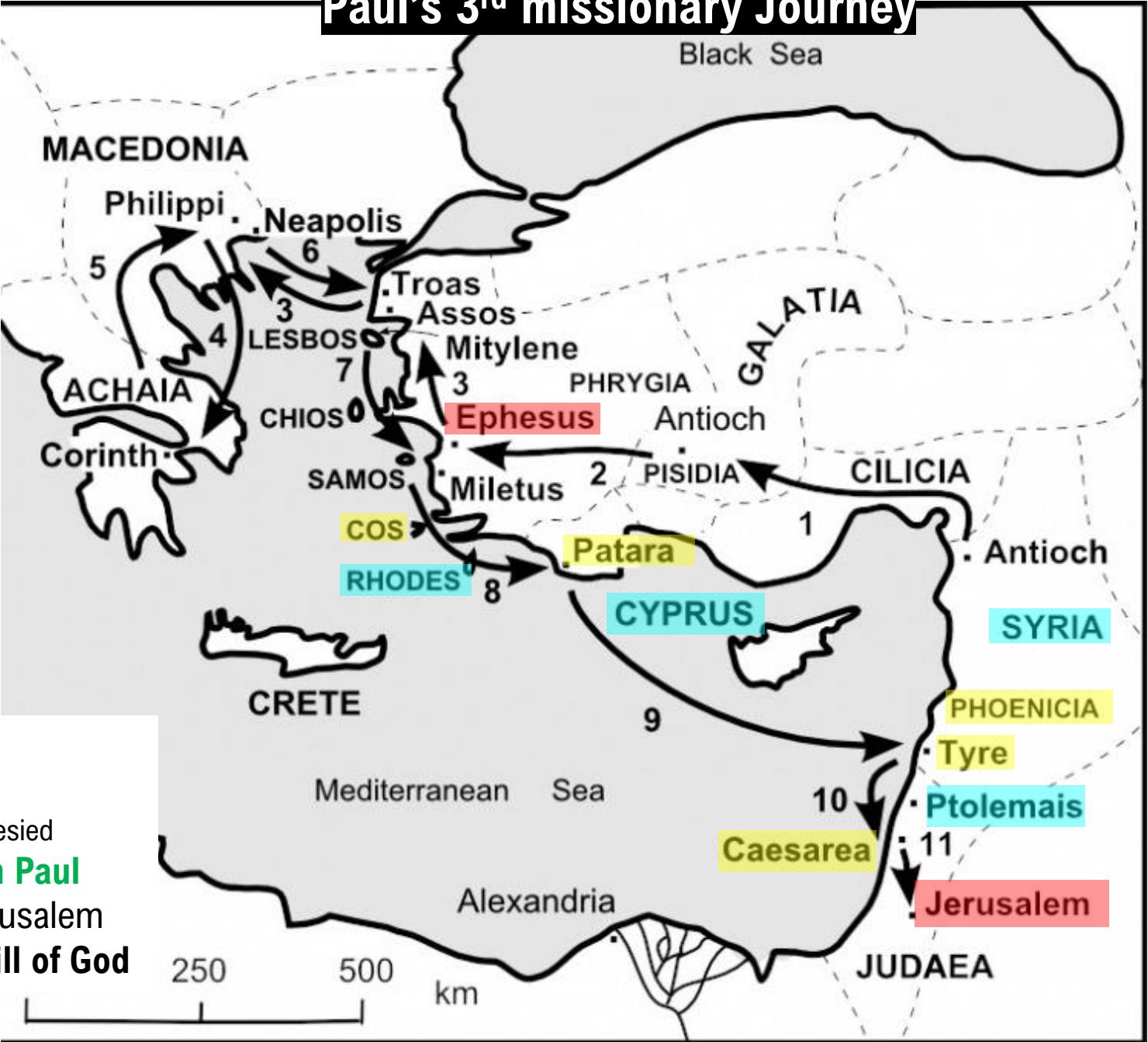
At Tyre (v4-6a)

- 7days 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)

- 7days with local believers who **warned Paul not to go Jerusalem** (revealed by HS)
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 >> 4 unmarried daughters who prophesied
- **Prophet Agabus's prophecy**
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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."

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...**

Basis of Accusation

Teachings against the Law

Defilement of God's Temple



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)

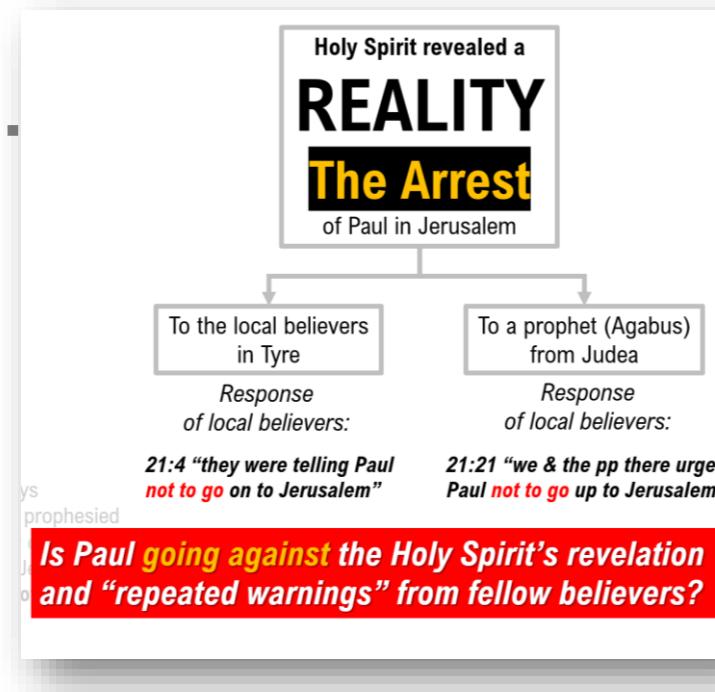
TEACHING POINT #1

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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?

Am I attentive to
**listen carefully
His Revelation/Voice**
to live my present life?

disregard
 weigh & explain
People's Feedback

run away / avoid
 face with courage
Situation Ahead

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

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

Acts 21:1-36

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Team 1

Paul

+ 8 friends

+ Disciples from Caesarea

Team 2

James (c.f. Acts 15)

+ brothers

+ all the elders

At Jerusalem

c.f. Acts 20:4

Acts 21:17-26

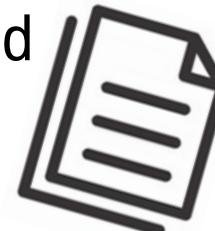
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accompanied Paul;
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and the Asians, **Tychicus** & **Trophimus** & Luke

+ Disciples from Caesarea

Paul ↔ **James**
+ 8 friends + brothers
+ Disciples from Caesarea + all the elders

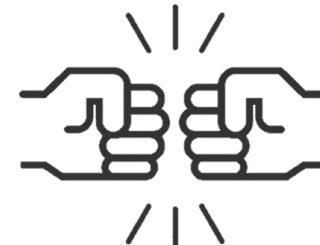
Thanksgiving Report (v19-20a)

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



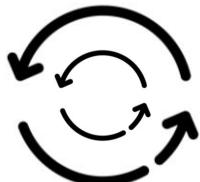
Conflicting Concern (v20b-25)

- 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)

J&S + B&P →

Response of Multitude

(in Antioch)

Rejoiced & Strengthened

Response of Multitude

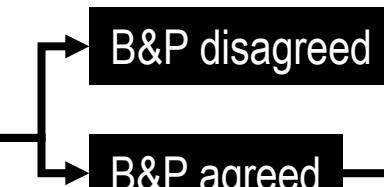
(in Jerusalem)

Silenced & Listened

Response of J leaders

(in Jerusalem)

Agreed & Sent two men



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."



Acts 15:1-35

(in summary)



B&P's Speech

- Declaring miracles & wonders
- God worked thru Gentiles

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



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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”

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

PAST PRACTICES

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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Teaching Point #2

Stay consistent in my Talk-Walk

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in order to do what is most loving

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

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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.**

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Seeing The Bigger CONTEXT

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



Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied Paul;

& of the Asians, Hermippus & Polydorus
and the Asians, Hermippus & Polydorus

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

Seeing The Bigger CONTEXT



STICK & STAY

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To His Plan

consistent in my Talk-Walk

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