



April 20, 2016

Acts 21:1-40

Acts 22:1-29

Pastor Gary Hamrick

### Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 21:1-14** - *“After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail. After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home. We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day. Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. he had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. After we had been there a number of days, 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.” ’ When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, ‘Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’ When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, ‘The Lord’s will be done.’ ”*
  - a. The Journey and the Ministry
    - i. Stops along the route to Jerusalem
      1. Cos was a small island off the coast of what is now Turkey.
      2. Rhodes was an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

3. Patara was a city in what is now southern Turkey.
4. Tyre was a port city in what is now Lebanon.
- ii. **Acts 21:4b** - *“Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.”*
  1. Pastor Gary said, “[Was] Paul disobeying the Holy Spirit because he was being warned through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, or [was] he simply being prepared by the Spirit, and are those who are warning him taking it a step too far by telling him not to go? In other words, it might be okay [by the Spirit to say to Paul that he should be aware and be careful because there will be trouble]. ... Or did they in fact get a word from the Lord urging him not to go to Jerusalem, and [Paul] disobeyed [a word from the Lord]? It’s debatable.”
- iii. Paul and his traveling companions made their way to Ptolemais and then on to Caesarea, which was a port city on the Mediterranean Sea.
- iv. Philip the Evangelist
  1. **Acts 6:1-6** - Philip was one of the first deacons in the New Testament church.
  2. **Acts 8:4-8** - Philip was involved in ministry in Samaria, and many heard the gospel, and many saw the miraculous things he did.
  3. **Acts 8:26-40** - Philip ministered to the high-ranking official who was in the court of Queen Candace of Ethiopia.
  4. There is no mention of Philip after his encounter with the Ethiopian official until we read that he was living in Caesarea, which covers a span of about fifteen to twenty years.
- v. Agabus
  1. This was the Spirit’s second warning to Paul concerning the trouble that awaited him at Jerusalem.
- vi. Paul’s commitment in ministry for the Lord
  1. **Acts 21:13b** - *“I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”*
  2. Referring to his remarks about **Acts 21:4b** concerning the warning Paul received from the Holy Spirit to not go to Jerusalem, Pastor Gary said, “I personally don’t think he [was] disobeying the Holy Spirit. ... I sincerely believe that he was called by the Lord to go [to Jerusalem]. ... I just think the Holy Spirit [was] preparing him. And maybe out of their love for [Paul], maybe they are adding the second part. ... I find it difficult to believe that twice, over the same situation, Paul [defiantly declared that he was going to go to Jerusalem no matter what anyone said]. We don’t really know for sure, but I suspect that this [was] a warning [to Paul so he would be mentally prepared

for what was coming].”

3. Paul’s friends deferred to the will of the Lord.

- a. Pastor Gary said, “By the way, [it’s not a bad thing to defer to the Lord’s will]. When you don’t know what else to pray and what else to do, it’s okay to [be content] with the Lord’s will be done. ... I don’t think we are always going to be one hundred percent tuned in [to what the Lord’s will is]. There are times when it’s okay to [pray according to what you believe the Lord’s will is and to then defer to the Lord]. That’s not a cop out.”

2. **Acts 21:15-16** - *“After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.”*

- a. When Paul returned to Caesarea, that completed his third missionary journey, which covered about 2,500 miles!
  - i. Approximately twelve hundred miles by sea and thirteen hundred miles by land.

3. **Acts 21:17-26** - *“When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James [the half-brother of Jesus], and all the elders were present. Paul greeted them and 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. As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality.’ The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.”*

a. The Problem

- i. The Church at this time was predominantly made up of Jewish believers, and the problem they had with Paul was that they believed he was teaching that Judaism was something they should forget and just follow Jesus.

- ii. James and the elders gave Paul instructions to follow that would demonstrate that he had not abandoned Judaism.
  - iii. In the future, Paul made it clear that it would be okay if Jewish believers wanted to practice some of the Jewish feasts, festivals, and rituals, but in doing so they should not think that they would be more righteous in God's eyes.
    - 1. [Romans 14:4–6, 13](#) - *“Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. ... Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother’s way.”*
    - 2. [Colossians 2:16–17](#) - *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*
  - iv. Pastor Gary said, “You can see Jesus [in] every Jewish tradition, [feast, celebration, and holy day].”
4. [Acts 21:27–Acts 22:29](#) - *“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, shouting, ‘Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place.’ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.) 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. While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. The crowd that followed kept shouting, ‘Away*

*with him!' As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, 'May I say something to you?' 'Do you speak Greek?' he replied. 'Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?' Paul answered, 'I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.' Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic, 'Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.' When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said, 'I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 'Who are you, Lord? I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. What shall I do, Lord? I asked. 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, 'Brother, Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.' When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 'Lord,' I replied, these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him. Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, 'Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!' As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, 'Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't*

*even been found guilty?’ When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. ‘What are you going to do?’ he asked. ‘This man is a Roman citizen.’ The commander went to Paul and asked, ‘Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?’ ‘Yes, I am,’ he answered. Then the commander said, ‘I had to pay a big price for my citizenship.’ ‘But I was born a citizen,’ Paul replied. Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.”*

- a. **Acts 21:40** in the 1984 NIV translates the word as Aramaic, while the KJV and NKJV translate the word as Hebrew.
  - i. Most of the Old Testament is written in Hebrew.
  - ii. Some parts of Daniel and Ezra are written in Aramaic.
  - iii. When the Jews were taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. and exiled to Babylon, they became part of that culture, so they had to learn that language.
  - iv. In Jesus’ day the Jews read Hebrew, but their common language was Aramaic.
    1. The Jews also may have known Latin and Greek.
  - v. Hebrew was not the common language of the Jews until the 19th century! <sup>1</sup>
- b. Gamaliel
  - i. Gamaliel first appears in the Bible in **Acts 5:34–39**.
  - ii. At this time, it seems like Gamaliel was no longer living.
  - iii. Gamaliel was widely known and respected greatly.
  - iv. Gamaliel was known as the Great Rabbi and the Glory of the Torah.
- c. Paul’s hearers believed the Gentiles were created to be fodder for the fires of hell!
- d. **Acts 22:1–29** is basically Paul’s testimony of his conversion to faith in Jesus.
  - i. Observations and Challenges from Paul’s Life
    1. Paul was tireless in his travels, having traveled thousands of miles to share the gospel with as many people as possible.
      - a. How far will you go out of your way to share Christ?
    2. Paul was faithful in service, even in the face of adversity.
      - a. When the going gets tough, how committed are you to live for Christ?
    3. Paul was bold in his witness, even in the face of angry opposition.
      - a. How willing are you to share your faith, even when it’s not popular?

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/eli-ezer-ben-yehuda-and-the-revival-of-hebrew>