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## 7. Paul's Third Journey

Acts 18:18 – 21:16

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Read Acts 21:1-16

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.<sup>[a]</sup><sup>2</sup> And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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<sup>6</sup> and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.

<sup>7</sup> When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers<sup>[b]</sup> and stayed with them for one day.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied.<sup>10</sup> While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.<sup>11</sup> 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<sup>[c]</sup> at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"<sup>12</sup> When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> 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."<sup>14</sup> And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

<sup>15</sup> After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.<sup>16</sup> 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.

## Outline of Third Journey

- To Galatia and Phrygia (18:23)
  - Strengthening the churches
- Ephesus (about 2 ½ years)
  - 12 men believed, did not receive the HS (19:1-8)
    - Paul explains to them about Jesus
    - They are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus & Receive the HS
  - Reasoning in the Synagogue (19:8) for three months
  - Teaching in the hall of Tyrannus (19:9-10) for 2 years
    - God was doing extraordinary miracles to reinforce Paul's ministry (19:11-12)
    - 7 Sons of Sceva cannot duplicate God's work (19:13-16)
    - Books of magic burned (50,000 pieces of silver) (19:17-20)
    - Riot at Ephesus (19:21-41)
      - Demetrius the silversmith afraid of losing his business
      - The crowds cry out Great is Artemis of the Ephesians
      - The town clerk quiets the crowd
      - No charges are made
- Macedonia (20:1-2)
  - Encouraging the churches
- Greece (20:2-3)
  - Stayed for 3 months
- **Return trip (20:3)**
- Through Macedonia (20:3-6)
  - Philippi (5 days)
  - Troas (7 Days)
    - Paul is preaching late in the evening (20:7-12)
    - Eutychus falls out of the window and Paul raises him from the dead.
  - Assos (20:13-14)
  - Mitylene (20:14)
  - Chios, Samos, Miletus (20:15)
    - Paul wanted to return to Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost (+, -25 years ago)

### 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.

- Miletus (20:17-38)
  - Paul send for the elders of the church at Ephesus
  - Paul's dialogue to the elders (20:18-35)
    - Paul commands the elders to watch over the flock.
    - Reminds them fierce wolves will creep in

- Reminds them that for three years he lived with them, not taking their money, but working (as a tentmaker?) and preaching the Gospel.
- Paul admits the Spirit tells him imprisonment & afflictions await him (20:22-23)

### Acts 20:22-23

And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by<sup>[a]</sup> the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there,<sup>23</sup> except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

- Cos (21:1)
- Rhodes then Patara (21:2)
- Tyre (stayed for 7 days (21:3-6)
  - Disciples told Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:4)

### Acts 21:4

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.

- Ptolemais one day (21:7)
- Caesarea (21:8-14) (shoreline of Jerusalem)
  - Stayed with Philip the Evangelist (from Acts 6:1-7) (one of the seven)
    - Agabus came from Judea, ties himself and prophesies (in the Spirit) that Paul will be prisoner (21:10-11)
    - They all urged Paul not to go to Jerusalem (21:12)
    - Paul responds to the requests not to go to Jerusalem (21:13-14)

### Acts 21:10-14

<sup>10</sup> While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup> 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<sup>[a]</sup> at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" <sup>12</sup> When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> 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." <sup>14</sup> And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done."

- Paul arrives in Jerusalem (21:15-16)
  - Stays with Mnason, an early disciple

## Paul's Last trip to Jerusalem

Paul returned from his third missionary journey to visit Jerusalem. He wanted to be present for the celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Evidently this had become somewhat of a celebration amongst Christians. Paul didn't want to miss this.

Paul had not been back to Jerusalem since before what is known as his second missionary journey. His last visit to Jerusalem is recorded for us in Acts 15. He visits to discuss the Gentile missions with the Apostles.

### Acts 15:1-5

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." <sup>2</sup> And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. <sup>3</sup> So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. <sup>4</sup> When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. <sup>5</sup> But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."

The Apostles met and discussed this matter. James spoke powerfully telling all of them that the Old Testament included the Gentiles, not excluded them. He quotes Amos 9:11-12 other passages in the prophets and tells how the Gentiles are also heirs of the promise.

### Acts 15:16-18

'After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, <sup>17</sup> that the remnant <sup>18</sup> of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things <sup>18</sup> known from of old.'

James continues that they should not tell the Gentiles to become circumcised, rather that they should stay away from things polluted by idols, stay away from sexual immorality, and from foods that were ritually strangled and from drinking blood (often occult). This was agreed upon by the Apostles and in accordance with the Gospel message of Grace alone by faith alone and they charged Paul & Barnabas to share this message with the Gentiles.

Paul and Barnabas went back to Antioch with this message and there was great rejoicing amongst the Gentiles. So Paul is essentially carrying this message to the Gentiles from the Apostles (delivered by James) throughout his missionary journeys.

Immediately following this Paul and Barnabas split up and Paul goes on his second missionary trip (which we discussed last week).

## Why return to Jerusalem?

I'm going to start raising a lot of questions here that we do not know the answer to – I want you to think this over with me. Too many times we listen to people talk about God's word and they have all of the answers – I don't know where they get all of them, because it would seem to me as if there are a lot of parts of the Bible that don't explain themselves – this is one of them.

Paul decided during his third journey that he wants to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover date with the Jews. He does not give a reason for this, but it seems clear that he knew that if he went to Jerusalem he would be imprisoned and sufferer persecution.

We do not know exactly why Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem. I could not find a passage that tells us what is going on here. What we do know is these things:

- The Holy Spirit made it clear to Paul that going to Jerusalem will result in persecution and imprisonment
- Paul still wanted to go.
- Many disciples (in the Spirit) told him not to go.
- Paul was in-fact imprisoned and persecuted in Jerusalem.

A few thoughts on this are possible:

- 1.) God wanted Paul to go to Jerusalem and witness to the conversion of the Gentiles. The disciples that told Paul not to go, and the Holy Spirit's conviction of Paul that he will suffer was meant (by God) to for-warn (and thus later encourage) Paul that God knew this was going to happen and in charge of all things.
- 2.) God did not want Paul to go to Jerusalem and Paul was going against God's plan. That this was Paul's ambition and God sent many disciples to warn him not to go. If This is the case, there might be a few possibilities for Paul's wanting to go to Jerusalem.
  - a. Paul wanted to share the success of the Gospel with the Apostles as encouragement for their ministry. Acts 21:17-20 tell how Paul went directly to James (and the others) to tell of the ministry to the Gentiles.
  - b. Paul wanted to have a ministry to the Jews, not just to the Gentiles. Out of love for his fellow Jew Paul wanted them to hear the Gospel and understand what he learned. He was fighting the Gospel the same way they were before God met him on the road to Damascus. Paul wanted the Jews to know Jesus. Romans 10 & 11 share with us Paul's extreme yearning for the Jewish people and His desire that they will be "grafted back in"

## It's O.K. not to Know

Sometimes we think that we need to know all about God to truly worship him and understand him. To be true followers of Christ we feel like we need to know our Bible flawlessly. I'm learning that the more I study God's word the more I realize how little I know about God, his plans and motives.

God used this chain of events (wither it was his will or not – if anything can happen that is not God's will) to imprison Paul, give him years to write many of the latter epistles, and to ultimately bring the Gospel

to Rome. God accomplished His purpose through this chain of events. Who can know the mind of the Lord?

### Isaiah 40:10-31

Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
behold, his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup> He will tend his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms;  
he will carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead those that are with young.

<sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand  
and marked off the heavens with a span,  
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure  
and weighed the mountains in scales  
and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who has measured<sup>[a]</sup> the Spirit of the LORD,  
or what man shows him his counsel?

<sup>14</sup> Whom did he consult,  
and who made him understand?  
Who taught him the path of justice,  
and taught him knowledge,  
and showed him the way of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,  
and are accounted as the dust on the scales;  
behold, he takes up the coastlands like fine dust.

<sup>16</sup> Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,  
nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> All the nations are as nothing before him,  
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

<sup>18</sup> To whom then will you liken God,  
or what likeness compare with him?

<sup>19</sup> An idol! A craftsman casts it,  
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold  
and casts for it silver chains.

<sup>20</sup> He who is too impoverished for an offering  
chooses wood<sup>[b]</sup> that will not rot;  
he seeks out a skillful craftsman  
to set up an idol that will not move.

<sup>21</sup> Do you not know? Do you not hear?  
Has it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup> It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;  
<sup>23</sup> who brings princes to nothing,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

<sup>24</sup> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when he blows on them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

<sup>25</sup> To whom then will you compare me,  
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

<sup>26</sup> Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
who created these?  
He who brings out their host by number,  
calling them all by name,  
by the greatness of his might,  
and because he is strong in power  
not one is missing.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
“My way is hidden from the LORD,  
and my right is disregarded by my God”?

<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup> but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.