

ACTS

Chapter 21 & 22

Note from Kathy

Goodbyes are never easy, but the apostle Paul would not allow anything to distract him from his call to share the gospel. The key to living a focused life is direction. We must be very careful not to allow distractions to draw our attention. Time is a limited resource. Zig Ziglar said, "Lack of direction, not lack of time is the problem. We all have 24 hours each day." Like Paul, we too must remain focused in order to accomplish all God has called us to do.

Acts 6:3-5

Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them⁴ and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."⁵

⁵ This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

Acts 11:28

One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)



Observation

1. Paul only has a few more stops before arriving in Jerusalem. The ship sailed to Cos (also Kios or Kos), then on to Rhodes then to Patara. In Patara, they boarded another ship and sailed across the Mediterranean Sea to Tyre. How long did they stay in Tyre? _____

When it was time for Paul to depart, how did the believers express their love for him?

2. Paul voyaged from Tyre to _____. They were greeted by the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. Then they traveled to _____ and stayed with Philip for a number of days. What do you know about Philip from Acts 6:3-5 and Acts 21:8-9.
3. While staying in Caesarea, what did Agabus from Judea prophecy about Paul? If his name sounds familiar that is because we also read about him in Acts 11:28.

■ Acts 21:12-13

When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.¹³ 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.”

■ Acts 21:21

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.

■ Acts 21:27-30

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,²⁸ shouting, “Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place.”²⁹ (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

■ Acts 21:33-36

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.³⁴ 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.³⁵ When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers.³⁶ The crowd that followed kept shouting, “Get rid of him!”

4. The believers who were with Paul pleaded with him not to go to Jerusalem. What did Paul say in response?
5. Paul left Caesarea and headed for Jerusalem. He was again warmly welcomed by believers. The next day Paul went to see _____. This is not the apostle who had been with Jesus. Herod had James the brother of John beheaded in Acts 12:2. Do a bit of digging and see if you can uncover anything about this man.
6. While Paul was with them he gave them a full, detailed report of all God had done among the Gentiles. What was their response to this report?
7. According to verse 21, things were not going to stay pleasant for long—what rumors had spread around Jerusalem concerning Paul?
8. As we read in Acts 21:28, it does not take much to stir up an angry crowd. All believers have an enemy, and that enemy has an agenda: to steal, kill and destroy. Those who wanted Paul stopped did not go to the Roman guards; they chose to stir up the crowd. What were their accusations against Paul?
9. The men in the crowd seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple. What was the crowd trying to do to Paul when the Roman soldiers arrived?
10. Jerusalem was under Roman rule. When the Roman commander heard about this riot, what did he do in verse 33?
11. Why did the commander find it difficult to get to the bottom of this matter?
12. As Paul was being taken into the barracks, he asked for permission to speak to the Israelites, in hopes he could reason with them. What facts did Paul present from Acts 21:39-Acts 22:21.
13. The crowd listened until Paul said, “I will send you far away to the Gentiles.” Then how did the crowd respond?

Acts 20:23-24

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!"²³ As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,²⁴ the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this.²⁵ 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?"

14. Roman guards were seldom men of compassion. This commander certainly was not. What were his orders in Acts 22:24?
15. As Paul was being tied to a pole and prepared for a severe beating, what question did he ask the guard, and why did this save him from being flogged?
16. Paul's problems were far from over. What did the Roman commander arrange for Paul the next day in verse 30?

Application

1. Philip is described as an evangelist in Acts 21:8. Evangelist in the Greek is euaggelizó—meaning one who brings good news. Although many others shared the good news of Jesus Christ only Philip was described this way in God's word. Would this word describe you?

Are you busy sharing the good news with those who cross your path?

2. Agabus was a man of few words, and his prophecy of what the future held for Paul was crystal clear. Sharing a painful truth is never easy. I doubt Agabus got any joy out of speaking this prophetic word from the Lord. It serves as a reminder that God is in control. Paul's friends briefly tried to persuade him, but then said, "The Lord's will be done." Is this your attitude?

If you knew your days were drawing to a close would your mind be on things of temporal or eternal value?

3. While Paul was with the believers in Jerusalem he gave them a full report of all God had been doing among the Gentiles. Even though things were especially hard for the believers in Jerusalem at this time, they praised God for his blessings. When you are experiencing a particularly rough season, can you honestly rejoice when you hear about the blessings others are experiencing, or do you stop and question God, why them and not me?
4. The believers in Jerusalem told Paul of the rumors circulating among the Jews concerning his teachings and activities. Think back on a time when something untrue was said about you. How did you handle it?

■ Proverbs 6:34

For jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge.

■ Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

■ James 3:14-16

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵ This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.

■ James 4:1-2

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ² You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

■ John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

5. We must never forget that we are in a battle. Battle lines have been drawn and our enemy is constantly on the lookout for a vulnerable and weak place to attack us. What is the root cause for the attack on Paul?

Read these verses and circle some of the root causes of attacks according to God's word: Proverbs 6:34, Galatians 5:19-21, James 3:14-16, James 4:1-2 and John 10:10

6. Did you notice how quickly and easily the crowd was stirred up against Paul? Many did not even know the reason for all the commotion, and, yet they were willing to be a part of this mob. The report was not even true. Trophimus the Ephesian had simply been seen with Paul, so they assumed the accusation was true. Have you ever jumped on board without finding out all the facts in a disagreement?

What often happens when all the facts are revealed?

7. Those in charge are often required to step in and separate opponents and facilitate a fair sharing of views. But this Roman commander had pre-judged the situation. He thought Paul was an Egyptian who had attempted to start a revolt. Those who are in charge should diligently strive to get the facts of any situation before making assumptions. Have you experienced someone in authority making a false assumption that could have or did cost you dearly?

How did you handle it?

8. Perhaps you are the one in charge and you need to get to the truth. Often the first one to bring an accusation appears right. Do you know what God's word says regarding discernment? There are many words of wisdom from the Lord on discernment. Look up the below verses and summarize them in your own words.

1 John 4:1

2 Timothy 2:15

Proverbs 2:1-5

Romans 12:2

9. Paul did not call in witnesses for his defense, although he could have. He stood to present the facts honestly and clearly. In the process, God gave him an opportunity to share the gospel to this entire crowd. Do you view your painful situations as an opportunity or a trial?

Are you willing to suffer in order to obediently share the good news of Jesus Christ?