

Acts of the Apostles – 21

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Traveled from Ephesus to Jerusalem (1-16).
 - 1. He spent seven days at Tyre (1-6).
 - 2. He spent one day at Ptolemais (7).
 - 3. He spent many days at Caesarea (8-16).
- B. Paul Met with the Apostles and Elders (17-25).
 - 1. He reviewed his work among the Gentiles (17-19).
 - 2. The elders explained the Jewish situation in Jerusalem (20-22).
 - 3. The elders ask Paul to take a Jewish vow (23-25).
- C. Paul Was Attacked by the Jews in the Temple (26-30).
 - 1. He entered the temple to complete his vow (26-27).
 - 2. The Jews of Asia recognized him (28-30).
- D. Paul Was Rescued by the Romans (31-40).
 - 1. They take him from the Jews (31-36).
 - 2. He asks to address the Jews (37-40).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul left Miletus, crossed the Mediterranean and spent seven days with disciples at Tyre (1-6).
 - 1. Luke is with Paul, so you will observe the first person pronouns “we” and “us.”
 - 2. The Ephesian elders loved Paul all the way to the ship, before he got away (20:37-38).
 - 3. Did he sail to Phenicia or Syria? Phenicia is a subset of Syria. He sailed to both.
 - 4. By Spirit prophecy (Rom 12:6; I Cor 12:10), they warn Paul not to go to Jerusalem.
 - a. Here we apply a sense to the words, or we end up with Paul disobeying God.
 - b. They warned of trouble at Jerusalem, if he were to go there (20:22-23; 21:11).
 - c. They also may have added their personal opinion to the Spirit’s revelation (12).
 - d. Implied senses and conditions to God’s Word are not new (Jonah 3:4; Is 38:1).
 - 5. Consider the affection of this relatively obscure church for Paul and his company.
- B. Paul left Tyre by ship and went to Ptolemais, where he spent one day with disciples (7).
 - 1. There are two kinds of salutes in the Word of God – verbal and physical.
 - a. **Salute.** To accost or address with words expressive of good wishes, respect, or homage, esp. with some customary formula of that import; to greet in words.
 - b. The verbal salutes in the O.T. were worshipful (Ruth 2:4; Psalm 129:8; 40:16).
 - c. The verbal salute in the N.T. was a greeting in Christ (II Thess 2:17-18).
 - d. The physical salute in the New Testament was a kiss (Romans 16:16).
 - 2. This obscure church of which we never read again had Paul’s company for a day.
- C. Paul and his company traveled to Caesarea and spent many days with Philip (8-16).
 - 1. Philip was initially ordained a deacon (6:1-6), but he also preached widely (8:5-40).
 - 2. After baptizing the eunuch and preaching widely, he settled at Caesarea (8:40).
 - 3. The apostolic office of evangelist exists no more, and modern evangelists are heretics.
 - a. **Evangelist.** One who preaches the gospel to those who have never heard it.
 - b. Philip was an evangelist by virtue of preaching to the unconverted Samaritans.
 - c. It was an office in rank below apostle and prophet but above bishop (Ep 4:11).
 - d. Philip was greater than a bishop by virtue of his Spirit assistance (8:39-40).
 - e. Evangelist and bishop are teachers with different audiences (I Cor 12:28).
 - f. There are no qualifications for this abrogated office (I Tim 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9).
 - g. New Testament bishops are to do **the work of** an evangelist (II Timothy 4:5).

- h. At times this may be the work required of their own flock (II Timothy 4:1-5).
- i. Deacons do not preach officially but tend carnal matters (6:1-6; I Tim 3:8-13).
- j. But there was nothing precluding a man from having both offices either simultaneously or consecutively, as we know from Philip's example.
- k. The modern concept of cheerleaders visiting a church for five days to fleece the flock of filthy lucre for performing no New Testament service is a farce.
 - (1) They are not teaching the unconverted in any way, shape, or form.
 - (2) Years of planning bring the church members to Billy Graham crusades.
 - (3) They neither know nor address the needs or dangers of the church.
 - (4) They do not have any ability or potential beyond a Bible bishop.
 - (5) They often know but a dozen simple sermons they repeat with theatrics.
 - (6) They take advantage of another's man flock made ready to their hand.
 - (7) They steal the esteem of a church that belongs only to their pastor.
 - (8) Do men want to loan their wife and children to a stranger for a week?
 - (9) Paul condemned such money-grubbing men (II Cor 10:12-18).
 - (10) They travel by motor home, plane, and car, but not by the Holy Ghost.
 - (11) They have as much New Testament legitimacy as the SDA's Ellen G. White's gift of prophecy and the Mormon's baptism for the dead.
 - (12) This does not preclude bishops visiting other churches with a purpose.
 - (13) The froth of modern "evangelism" is short-term and in the flesh.
 - (14) There is not one name in the book of Life by any evangelist but Christ.
 - (15) The Primitive Baptists make this farce the trademark of their bishops.
- 4. His four virgin daughters were prophetesses in the New Testament sense of the word.
 - a. God had promised to pour out His Spirit on women, which He did (2:17-18).
 - b. The gift of prophecy was divine ability by the Spirit to reveal God's Word regarding future things or spiritual things yet unknown.
 - (1) The gift of prophecy was partial and temporary (I Cor 13:8-10).
 - (2) We now have the more sure word of prophecy (II Peter 1:19-21).
 - (3) Ellen G. White did not have any such gift as claimed by the SDA, but she did have infirmities of body and mind and spirit and soul.
 - c. These women did not prophesy in church for clear reasons (I Cor 14:34-35).
 - d. But what if God gave them a prophecy? They could control it (I Cor 14:32).
 - e. Note God regulating prophets, not prophetesses (I Cor 14:29-31; Luke 2:36).
 - f. And they had a full head of hair covering their head also (I Cor 11:1-16).
 - (1) We reason this first from the overall context of hair as the covering.
 - (2) We reason this second from the stated fact hair is her covering.
- 5. Paul's stay of many days in Caesarea indicates he may have missed Pentecost (20:16), yet the presence of Jews from Asia who recognized him easily belies this point (27).
- 6. As at Tyre, Paul receives another warning of the coming trouble in Jerusalem (4).
 - a. Paul already explained to the Ephesians elders of these warnings (20:22-23).
 - b. Agabus also prophesied many years earlier of a great dearth (11:28).
 - c. We see in the prophecy a warning of Paul being taken by the Romans.
 - d. Both Luke and the rest of the company and those of Caesarea appealed to Paul.
 - e. Consider Paul's glorious response to the prospect of imprisonment (20:24).
- 7. All the warning parties had to commit the matter to the will of the Lord, as we should.
 - a. If they had persuaded Paul, would the Lord's will have been done anyway?
 - b. Are things within our control outside the Lord's will? Or only less visible?
 - c. Did they doubt or question the Lord's will? Or simply submit to it?
 - d. Are they talking about Paul's obedience to the Lord's revealed things or his protection and God's glory by the Lord's secret things (Deuteronomy 29:29)?

- e. Regardless of our plans or any activity, it is subject to God's will (Jas 4:15).
 - f. Our life is one of voluntary and happy submission to God's will (Matt 6:10).
 - g. We should learn to love and trust His sovereign will (Prov 16:9,33; 19:21).
- 8. Mnason of Cyprus has been honored for charity and will be honored (Matt 25:31-46).
- D. Paul met apostles and elders at Jerusalem and reviewed his work among the Gentiles (17-19).
 - 1. The Jewish brethren at Jerusalem were glad to see and hear the apostle's company.
 - 2. James is our Lord's brother (Gal 1:19) and ruled the council at Jerusalem (15:13-21).
 - 3. James was pastor of the Jerusalem Church, which had many elders of various offices.
 - 4. Paul saluted them, as before described, and explained in detail his ministerial successes among the Gentiles by the blessing of God.
- E. The apostles and elders explain the large Jewish congregation and their view of Paul (20-22).
 - 1. James and the elders point out similar Jewish success and their great zeal of the law.
 - 2. The rumor in Jerusalem, which concerned these elders, was that Paul in his travels taught the Jews in other places to reject circumcision and other Jewish customs.
 - a. The rumor is specifically regarding what he taught the Jews in other places.
 - b. The rumor was not true, as a simple review of our previous studies will show.
 - c. Paul, obeying the Jerusalem council, did not require the law of Gentiles (16:4).
 - d. But he did still esteem and allow the law for Jews (16:2; 18:18; 20:16).
 - e. His manner of modification in things indifferent is well known (I Cor 9:19-23).
 - 3. Because the thousands of Jews would come to see Paul, they needed to end the rumor.
- F. The apostles and elders request Paul to show Jewish sympathy with a Jewish vow (23-25).
 - 1. James and the elders propose a Jewish vow to end the rumor of his rejection of Moses.
 - 2. Using great caution, they specifically identify their proposal as applying to Jews only.
 - 3. Four men, weak Jewish Christians loyal to the law, were under Nazarite separation.
 - 4. This was the vow of the Nazarite (Numbers 6), which involved a time of separation, an offering for purification, and the shaving of the head to indicate the end of the vow.
 - 5. The Nazarite separated himself by avoiding haircuts, wine, grapes, and dead bodies.
 - 6. Paul was joining in the end of the vow for the purification, sacrifice, and shaving.
- G. Paul, with four other men, enters the temple to keep the terms of their vow (26-27).
 - 1. Paul entered the temple with the four to inform the priests of the end of the vow.
 - 2. Just before they would shave their heads, the unbelieving Jews of Asia (his bitter enemies from Ephesus) recognized him, grabbed him, and falsely accused him.
- H. Jews from Asia recognized Paul in the temple and stirred up a riot against him (28-30).
 - 1. "This is the man" indicates that Paul's reputation had preceded him.
 - 2. They falsely accused him for preaching against the Jews, the law, and the temple.
 - 3. Since they had seen him earlier in the city with Trophimus, a Gentile from Ephesus, they falsely assumed in their rage that Paul had brought him into the temple.
 - 4. With the whole city irritated, they dragged Paul out of the temple and shut the doors.
 - 5. You would think the temple of God should be the safest place of refuge of all.
- I. The Roman chief captain came and rescued Paul, as the Jews were about to kill him (31-36).
 - 1. In the Providence and will of God, they took their time preparing to kill Paul.
 - 2. The chief captain, responsible for the city's garrison, heard the city was having a riot.
 - 3. The Jews left Paul partially beaten, when they saw the Roman soldiers coming.
 - 4. Unable to determine his identity or offence, Paul is carried into the Roman fortress.
 - 5. The Jews zealously and violently pursued with shouts of Calvary, "Away with him."
- J. Paul asks the chief captain for permission to address the Jews trying to kill him (37-40).
 - 1. The chief captain asks whether Paul was a notorious Egyptian known for sedition.
 - 2. Paul claims he is a Jew, modestly refers to his citizenship, and humbly asks to speak.
 - 3. Paul addresses his nation, desiring to kill him, in the Hebrew tongue of their fathers.
 - 4. The will of the Lord had been done: Paul was protected and permitted to preach.