

**Outline**

1. Journey to Jerusalem
  1. From Miletus to Patara
  2. From Patara to Tyre
    1. Remained seven days
    2. Paul warned not to go to Jerusalem
    3. Departed in safety
  3. Tyre to Ptolemais
  4. Ptolemais to Caesarea
    1. Stayed with Philip
    2. Agabus warns Paul of arrest in Jerusalem
  5. Caesarea to Jerusalem
2. In Jerusalem
  1. Lodged with Mnason of Cyprus
  2. Paul encouraged to pay the vow of two disciples
3. Riot in the temple
  1. Caused by misunderstanding
  2. Saved by the commander of the Roman garrison

**Commentary**

We should be careful not to read too much into the statement that Paul was “warned” not to go to Jerusalem to cause us to assume that Paul disregarded what the Holy Spirit had to say and continued on toward Jerusalem in disobedience to the Spirit’s warning. Rather, it seems to me more likely that Paul’s friends were told to warn Paul of what was to come and that they, in turn, were telling Paul not to go. This type of warning would agree with what Paul had previously told the Ephesian eldership that he was “constrained by the Spirit” (Acts 20:22; cf Acts 19:21) to go to Jerusalem and also that the Spirit was testifying “in every city” that “imprisonment and afflictions await me” (Acts 20:23). This would also have the story

next related regarding Agabus follow the same pattern.

Regarding the phrase “for many days” in 21:10, *The Pulpit Commentary* says:

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**Many days** (ἡμέρας πλείους). In ch. 13:31 ἐπὶ ἡμέρας πλείους is applied to the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. In ch. 18:20 πλείονα χρόνον is a longer time—longer, viz. than he had intended. In ch. 25:6 ἡμέρας πλείους ἢ δέκα is “more than ten days.” Here, therefore, it is too strong an expression to say “many days.” According to Lewin’s calculation, he was only five days at Cæsarea—from May 10 to May 15. Howson’s “some days,” which is the rendering also in the margin of the R. T., is much better than “many.” (Spence-Jones, 2:171-172.)

Lenski appears to agree with the idea that the text is only conveying that he stayed longer than intended. He also adds some more color to the idea:

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Both ἐπὶ in the participle and “more days” state that the stay in Philip’s home was extended beyond the time at first intended. Paul had time, there were still some days before Pentecost, his date for being in Jerusalem. And we may be sure his hosts and his friends in Caesarea clung to him as long as they possibly could. (Lenski, 867-868.)

Paul again recounts the things done by God through him. The issues from before are now settled. The only remaining concern is about unity among believers. Some had begun to spread rumors concerning Paul and his attitude regarding Jews and their relationship to the old law.

Notice the drastic difference from the rumors concerning Paul with the truth. Here was a man who had Timothy circumcised, yet the rumors concerning him were that he was “telling all of the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses” (Acts 21:21). Their solution to this was to have Paul purify himself along with four other brothers who had apparently taken Nazarite vows. The final part of the completion of the vow requires the Nazirite to “shave his consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting” (Num. 6:18). It was not unknown for a person with means to pay the vows of the less fortunate. Josephus, for instance, records that Agrippa had done so for “many of the Nazirites” (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 19:294).

Luke attributes the riot in the temple to a misunderstanding. Having seen Paul with a Gentile the previous day, they just assumed that he was with one in the holy place of the temple. This was a very serious matter.

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Josephus described the wall separating the Court of the Gentiles from the Holy Place, or inner courts reserved for Jews alone, as “a stone balustrade, three cubits high [c.41/2 feet high; though *M Middoth* 2:3 says it was ‘ten hand-breadths high,’ c.21/2 feet high] and of excellent workmanship” (Jos. War V, 193 [v.2]). “In this at regular intervals,” he said, “stood slabs giving warning, some in Greek, others in Latin characters, of the law of purification, to wit that no foreigner was permitted to enter the Holy Place, for so the second enclosure of the temple was called” (ibid., V, 194 [v.2]; cf. VI, 124–26 [ii.4]; Antiq. XV, 417 [xi.5]). One of these Greek notices was found by C.S. Clermont-Gannau in 1871 and two Greek fragments of another were found in 1935. The complete notice reads: “No foreigner is to enter within the balustrade and embankment around the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will have himself to blame for his death which follows” (cf. “New Discoveries,” PEQ, 3 [1871], 132). Roman authorities were so conciliatory of Jewish scruples about this matter that they ratified the death



penalty for any Gentile—even a Roman citizen—caught going beyond the balustrade (*Soreg*) (cf. Jos. War VI, 126 [ii.4]). (Longenecker, 9521-522.)

As with Ephesus, this brings the city into an uproar. In verse 31 it says that Jerusalem was “in confusion” (compare Acts 19:29) and in verse 34 it says that some were shouting one thing and some something else (compare Acts 19:32).

### **Thought Questions**

Consider the following thought questions

1. Why would the disciples tell Paul not to go up to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4, 12)?
2. Why would Luke make a point of saying that the wives and children accompanied them to the edge of town in verse 5?
3. What would be the point in showing that Paul lived according to Jewish customs (Acts 21:24)?
4. Why would the Jews have sought to kill Paul rather than Trophimus?
5. Why would the tribune allow Paul to speak to the crowd?